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Spring • 1957

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 26 *Spring, 1957* NUMBER 2

Trade and Aid

GUNNAR MYRDAL

I

EVER SINCE MY FIRST CONTACT WITH AMERICA, one cultural trait of the Americans has stood out in high relief; and as a foreigner, who by the accidents of life has come to know and love America so well, I have felt sufficiently free of inhibitions to state it bluntly: the predominance of what I have come to refer to as "Christian neighborliness." There is in America a basic sentiment of generosity toward those who are less fortunate—a sympathy for, and solidarity with, the underdog. This has its roots in America's singular material and spiritual history. I believe that important elements of American behavior in external and internal relations would be misunderstood if this trait were not recognized.

This concern in America for the down-and-out is, unfortunately, not so strong among the other nations in that one-sixth of the non-Soviet world which is industrialized, economically progressive and well off. Indeed, it is quite exceptional. A measure of the practical consequence of this is the fact that, directly and indirectly, the

✪ Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe since 1947, GUNNAR MYRDAL has long been active in the economic and public affairs of his native Sweden. Several of the arguments in this article have been developed in his recent book, *An International Economy*, and will be further considered in his forthcoming *Economic Theory and the Underdeveloped Regions*. This article was presented in December as an address at the New School of Social Research.

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United States is paying close to 90 per cent, or perhaps even a little more, of what capital grant aid and technical assistance are actually given at present to the poorer majority of mankind.

But this same generous America often turns out to be niggardly and selfish in its regular commercial and financial policies and practices. From the time when it was itself underdeveloped—though underdeveloped in a sense very different from the poorer countries' status then or now—and when economic nationalism was rationally motivated—which it hardly is at the present time—the United States has until this very day preserved much of a narrow nationalistic attitude toward its participation in world commerce.

Proposals for aid will always have a more sympathetic hearing in this country than appeals for rational generosity in ordinary economic affairs. Even in its relations with foreign countries whose economic success it desired to promote, America not only gave aid but also made regular loans on business terms, trying to hide this from itself and the world by including it under the heading of foreign "aid" or "assistance." This is a bookkeeping practice which has not contributed to clarity of thinking at home or abroad. In my opinion, this practice and the confused thinking behind it are greatly responsible for the recent rapid deterioration of sound business standards in the field of international finance.

These attitudes and behavior patterns are reflected in the public discussion in America of the country's international responsibilities. Good and public-minded Americans in the great liberal tradition, whether they happen to vote the Republican or Democratic ticket, are continuously pleading for more generous American aid to the underdeveloped countries, and for aid without political strings. These Americans are persistently putting forward the perfectly valid argument that the basic justification for aid is simply that the peoples of underdeveloped countries become healthier, happier and economically more progressive, thus having a better chance to become freer and stronger as independent nations in the world community.

Yet, in contrast to the energy and courage displayed in holding up to the nation its duty to give more aid in wiser ways to under-

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developed countries, stands the shy half-heartedness—even of the nation's intellectual leaders—in facing the need to break down the heavy barriers of nationalistic measures which still largely dominate America's regular foreign economic policies. Year by year it seems to be more generally accepted that nothing much can be done to change these policies. This unfortunate attitude is becoming so established that the topic of America's normal commercial and financial relations with the world at large is not even discussed constructively and intensively any longer.

Aid to underdeveloped countries—in the sense of capital grants and technical assistance given free of charge—can, however, never be anything but a rather minor part of the total complex of economic policies which the United States, like all the other richer countries, should adopt if it really wishes to help the underdeveloped countries in their struggle for economic development. This would remain true even were aid to the underdeveloped countries expanded to that much larger volume called for on rational grounds, and even were that aid organized in a rationally justifiable multilateral and truly international framework.

This complex of economic policies, which the richer countries should adopt in addition to providing aid, comprises a redirection of their whole manner of making business—or of not making business—with each other and, in particular, with the underdeveloped countries. These countries are at the richer countries' mercy because they are poor. For their welfare and their success in engendering economic development they depend heavily on the richer countries' policies on trade and on the movement over their boundaries of people, capital, enterprise and techniques.

If the richer countries made a determined move to shape their regular economic policies a little more in the interest of the underdeveloped countries, this would be of a vastly greater consequence than any aid which they could ever hope to get. If, instead, the richer nations persist in carrying on their ordinary business with the underdeveloped world on the principle of narrow selfishness, even the most generous aid schemes become nothing more than palliatives or, to quote the distinguished American economist Professor Jacob Viner of Princeton University, "conscience money."

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This does not imply, of course, that aid is unnecessary or unimportant. Indeed, the stabilization on a considerably higher level of capital aid and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries is urgently called for. It would also produce, among other effects, a more solid basis for a wholesome development of those regular business relations which are so much more important.

II

My main criticism of the present state of affairs in the field of grant aid and technical assistance is directed against the fact that the United States has been left to pay almost the whole bill for such help.

It is not difficult to explain why this has happened. The pattern was set many years ago. At the end of the Second World War the United States, unlike its allies, found itself not only undamaged by military action but much better off economically than at the beginning of the war. In this situation it was natural that the United States undertook almost singlehandedly the responsibility for rendering the financial assistance that was needed for reconstruction and recovery.

By far the larger part of this aid went to the countries of Western Europe which—apart from the Southern European countries—must be included with North America and Australasia in any international comparison as part of the small minority of countries which are industrially advanced and economically well off. This pattern of one rich country noncommercially aiding the other rich countries was fortified by the Marshall Plan and the European Recovery Program, for which external finance was provided by the United States.

Here I am not discussing all the wholesome effects for Europe, and for the entire world, of this large-scale capital aid from America to Western Europe. In the present context I must, however, point out one of its detrimental moral effects. This was that the peoples and the politicians, both in the United States itself and in Western Europe, became conditioned to accept as a normal and right thing that the United States should take upon itself practically the whole of the financial burden of providing international aid in any part

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of the world where it was required, with purely token contributions coming from other economically advanced nations.

Naturally, it has to be remembered that the United States' production and income is a very big part of the total production and income of all the richer countries taken together, and its share of the burden in any fair scheme for international aid would be a large one. But its fair share could not be so large as the actual share which the United States has carried so far.

A very important moral element of every scheme for redistributing income, national as well as international, should be that the burden be shared in a just and equitable manner. It is not fair and will never be felt to be fair that a man who lives in Stockholm, Geneva or Brussels does not share equally the burden of aid to underdeveloped countries with a man in the same income bracket living in Columbus, Ohio, in Detroit, Michigan, or in Denver, Colorado.

I am inclined to believe that most of the things which are imperfect and wrong in our present aid schemes spring from this lack of justice in their financing. In America the situation is naturally felt to be unfair, even though little is said about it. And this, I believe, is a main reason why it has proved politically unfeasible to raise the level of assistance to underdeveloped countries, as well as why the suggested appropriations for aid purposes are constantly in danger of being whittled away in Congress.

It also explains in part why some of those who are urging higher appropriations become tempted to argue their case in terms of political or even strategic advantages to America, and why it becomes so difficult to keep the appropriations free from political conditions. This leads naturally also to labeling an increasing part of legitimate economic aid as military aid.

When international aid becomes unilateral and politics thus enter into its distribution, both moral and economic standards are apt to crumble. A selection according to political interests is often bound to imply the diversion of aid to the less necessitous countries or to those least capable of using it effectively for economic advancement.

In the receiving countries, unilateral aid may have equally un-

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fortunate effects. The political conditions of the aid are resented by their peoples. Indeed, political strings and the existence of ulterior motives will be suspected, even when they are not present.

The direction and control of the use of aid will also in many cases be less efficient. An underdeveloped country may be willing and even grateful to take from an international agency the advice which it is not happy or, because of popular resentment, not able to accept under prodding by a single country, least of all when that country is very rich, powerful and carefree in its public expressions.

This is, of course, one important reason why aid is best channeled through an international agency. But it would be almost preposterous to suggest that more than a minor—indeed, almost only a symbolic—part of the total flow of aid should be so handled as long as one country pays almost all of the costs. A fairer distribution of the financial burden is, therefore, a condition for transferring, on a large scale, aid and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries into an institutional framework which is multilateral and truly international.

I have suggested in another connection that the inimical effects of unilateral aid given mainly by the United States are so serious that—even giving full consideration to the urgent needs of the underdeveloped countries—I would rather see a short-term decrease in America's willingness to give international aid than the establishment of the present pattern as a firm and lasting one. Indeed, the continuation of present conditions will almost inevitably result in a cutting down of American aid.

Further reflection convinces me that a growing unwillingness on the part of the United States to give aid unilaterally might well be the most effective way of placing before the other economically advanced countries the necessity of considering a more equitable sharing of burdens. If fairly apportioned, the giving of international aid and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, even on a considerably increased scale, would never imply very great sacrifices for any individual country. It would not amount to more than the setting aside of a portion of the expected normal annual increase in the national income of an advanced country.

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III

Economic development in an underdeveloped country necessarily implies the formation of capital on a relatively large scale. The much greater part of this new capital must be produced by savings in the country itself.

The success and speed of the country's development policy will, however, depend on the possibility of acquiring a part, even if only a smaller part, of its capital needs from abroad to help pay for the increase in import of capital goods and other consequences of the development policy on the foreign payment sector of the economy. In the main, such capital import will have to be procured on business terms. Under no conditions would capital grants-in-aid suffice. Similarly, the underdeveloped countries will have to pay for most of the industrial techniques and know-how they need; only a minor portion can be acquired gratis under national and international technical assistance schemes.

The international capital market broke down in September, 1931, and has as yet not been re-established in anything like its former scope and shape. But even before the collapse of the capital market, indeed even in the days before the First World War, comparatively little capital went to those parts of the world we now characterize as the underdeveloped countries and which were then called the backward regions. And this has, of course, its relation, both as cause and effect, to the fact that there was, even then as now, not much economic development in those areas.

Nevertheless, colonial governments, and private corporations operating under their protection, as well as governments and corporations in those other backward countries which enjoyed a precarious political independence, could then sell securities on stock exchanges to finance the building of railroads, ports, electric power stations and other public utilities. It is the breakdown of the private long-term capital market which has forced the governments in the richer countries into the international finance business.

Yet, governments are rather badly equipped to function as international financiers, and their activity in this field is not an entirely encouraging experience. The International Bank for Re-

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construction and Development is likewise nothing other than a substitute for what the regular private capital market is no longer expected to accomplish. It has, on the whole, done a more competent job in the field than the individual governments.

The aggregate financing activity of the governments and the intergovernmental International Bank does not amount, however, to more than a very minor part of what could have been expected from the private capital market had it not succumbed. Even considered collectively, these credits often do not counterbalance the capital flight from some of the poorer countries and the home-taking from former colonies and dependencies of earlier investments.

Many causes underlie this discouraging development. Among them the political tension in the world and the fear of war loom very large. By its direct and indirect effects this political factor probably accounts for the larger part of the difficulties in re-establishing an international market in which buyers could be found for bonds and shares issued by governments and business enterprises in the underdeveloped countries. The memories of the losses on foreign securities during the Great Depression and the Second World War contribute to the feeling that investments abroad are very risky. And fears have been compounded by nationalizations.

In the economically advanced countries, logical sources of capital supply, conditions of a rather steadfast boom and "full employment" have reigned since the war, making investment opportunities at home appealingly profitable and secure. In the underdeveloped countries economic nationalism has meanwhile been growing, and a newly won independence has sometimes been used to discriminate against foreign investors. Government plans for economic development have often included policies which radically reduce the chances of very great profits from direct foreign investments.

From the point of view of underdeveloped countries, direct foreign investment seems too costly a way of inducing capital inflow. In any case, the need they feel most is for capital at fixed interest to make possible all sorts of large-scale social and over-all investments. For such investments the governments or other public

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authorities have to take the entrepreneurial responsibility since the activities are not the kind to induce direct investment from abroad, except under conditions generally less acceptable to the governments of underdeveloped countries.

The difficulties in the way of again building up an international capital market are immense. Nevertheless, this is the task which has to be accomplished if we do not want to see collapse all our hopes of a developing progressive welfare democracy in the world. I have suggested elsewhere that it should now be the duty of the economists to undertake intensive and constructive institutional studies of the international capital market, studies aimed at finding new means and ways of getting capital to move in larger quantities over state boundaries and, in particular, toward the underdeveloped countries.

Government lending and the activity—on an expanding scale—of the International Bank will certainly have to play their role in any further restoration of the international capital market. But the task is much wider and much bigger than these can perform. Many more, and different, channels are needed. Forms and guarantees must be found for getting private capital again to move more freely outside national boundaries.

Even if the most important capital need of the underdeveloped countries is long-term lending to their governments and other public authorities and to their business corporations, there is also, I believe, a scope for increased direct or entrepreneurial private investments. Suggestions have been made that new forms should be tried out for co-operation in economic development of underdeveloped countries in which business firms in the developed countries would provide part of the capital to be invested for a limited time only and under government guarantees for the transference of both profit and amortization. The foreign firms should also, for the initial period covered by this credit arrangement, provide management and be responsible for the introduction of techniques and managerial know-how.

Whatever forms are chosen to get capital to move not only between the richer countries, but also from the richer countries to the poorer ones—instead of in the opposite direction as is the

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prevailing tendency—will require changes in the underdeveloped countries' attitudes toward foreign capital. But positive inducements in the richer countries will also be needed.

Inside the individual national welfare states the need for inducements in the form of subsidies or guarantees of various types to steer capital toward their underdeveloped regions has been recognized and accepted for many decades. Without such intentionally applied interferences in the play of the market forces, the banking system and several other institutional segments of the capital market would have operated, even more than was actually the case, as apparatus for siphoning off to the richer regions the savings in the poorer ones. And, undoubtedly, a main conclusion of the serious study of the international capital market, which I urge, will be the desirability and, indeed, the necessity to provide similar inducements for private capital to move from the richer to the poorer countries. The costs to the richer countries of such inducements would be cheaper than those of financing grant aid. In my opinion, subsidizing private capital to move would also be more conducive to a healthy economic development in the underdeveloped countries.

Again I would stress, as in the case of aid, that the burden of supplying credit to underdeveloped countries should rightly not be laid entirely on the shoulders of the United States. Compared with the greater part of the world the countries in northwestern Europe are rich. They are much richer than were Great Britain and France before the First World War when such a high proportion of those countries' national incomes actually went into investments and credits for the economic development of foreign countries.

The countries in northwestern Europe have, indeed, very important interests of their own in preserving their export markets in the underdeveloped world. As credits and investments are always to some extent tied to exports, this should give them selfish interests in participating as lenders on a big scale in the international capital market. Also, much of the talk during recent years about returning to currency convertibility becomes pretty much nonsense if the richer countries in northwestern Europe persist in their present policy of capital autarchy.

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But I see very few signs in Europe that these countries would really be prepared to undertake a major responsibility as suppliers of capital credit in the international market. Again, a pattern of attitudes and practices has been established which is continuously becoming fortified as a permanent institutional situation, permitting even the richer countries in northwestern Europe to back out of international responsibility. The partly successful attempts in Western Europe during recent years to get away from discriminatory import restrictions have not been matched very fully by serious efforts to "liberalize" capital flows also.

But, in fact, more than freedom is needed for capital to move. There will have to be positive inducements. And the giving of such inducements assumes that the governments have decided that a flow of capital to underdeveloped countries is a desirable goal—desirable to the extent of even warranting certain financial sacrifices.

It is, perhaps, natural to feel that the international tension, the acute risks of wars and revolutions in various parts of the world, and the nationalistic and discriminatory policies in underdeveloped countries exclude at present any serious and large-scale efforts on the part of the richer countries to provide the poorer countries with more capital for economic development. But, certainly, letting these countries starve for capital seems, at the same time, the surest way of increasing the risks of wars and revolutions and of spurring their nationalism.

IV

Of equal importance to the underdeveloped countries in their struggle to lift themselves out of economic stagnation is the kind of international trade policy the richer countries pursue.

I have elsewhere urged the rationality of a "double standard morality" in trade policy as between underdeveloped and developed countries. The poorer countries, if they embark upon economic development, will have to restrict imports of less essential commodities and will have to spur their exports, if for no other reasons than those of balancing demand on and supply of their foreign exchange resources. Because of their weak and lopsided economies, they will also have very special reasons to use such interferences in foreign trade for precise protective purposes.

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As the interest of underdeveloped countries will always be to import as much as their foreign exchange resources allow, their interference with their foreign trade will, generally speaking, not decrease its total volume but only change its pattern. The import restrictions of a rich country like the United States, which has no payment difficulties, must, on the contrary, tend to decrease the volume of international trade, as there is no mechanism by which a restriction of the imports of one group of commodities is automatically compensated by an increase in imports of another group.

The conclusion one can draw from this is that in a better integrated world the richer countries should in the common interest abstain from interferences in foreign trade and, in particular, open their frontiers for imports from the rest of the world. At the same time, it should be recognized that the underdeveloped countries cannot follow this rule without compromising—perhaps seriously—their ambitions for economic development.

The thesis that underdeveloped countries embarking upon economic development will be obliged to control their foreign trade, at least for exchange reasons, and that they also have special reasons to use these controls to protect sectors of industrial growth does not, of course, imply that the commercial and financial policies of these countries, as they are actually taking shape, are very wise. In fact, in most underdeveloped countries these policies are neither well planned nor efficiently carried out. The underdeveloped countries are badly in need of expert advice on how to do things better. Too often, however, the advice they actually receive is simply to abstain from interference with trade and payments. Such advice they cannot possibly follow without giving up their efforts to engender economic development.

So far as the United States is concerned, trade practices have been, and are, opposite to the rule of reason. The United States has followed a harshly protectionist commercial policy on its own behalf while preaching to the entire world, including the underdeveloped countries, the virtues of liberalizing and freeing trade from state interferences. Indeed, the richest country in the world sticks tenaciously to commercial policies which would rather suit an underdeveloped country; at the same time, that country has been

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pressing even the poorest countries to behave as if they were rich.

Taking into account the size of the American economy, the small relative importance of its international trade and the variegated resources of the country, and taking account also of the disadvantages of temporary disturbances and losses in particular sectors, I rather doubt whether a substantial freeing of trade could really be argued conclusively to be in the national interest if this is narrowly interpreted. The effect would in any case be marginal. Conceivably it could be negative. Under no circumstances, however, could a freeing of trade be very expensive to America. But such a substantial change in the commercial policy of the United States would very certainly be strongly in the interest of the rest of the world.

On the other hand, a free trade commercial policy on the part of the underdeveloped countries would not be in their own interest, and not in the world interest either. As a prominent Indian official has recently explained: "Equality of treatment is equitable only among equals." Much of American and, more generally, the richer countries' thinking and planning in the preparation for the once proposed International Trade Organization, and in later connections too, have been founded upon a false interpretation of the principle of equality.

The world interest, in which the United States naturally has a big share, would thus be advanced by a unilateral lowering of trade barriers by the United States. The same should rightly apply to the other richer countries as well. If for most of the northwestern European countries such a demand still sounds grandiose and inapplicable, the explanation is that they have not yet reached that level of "financial soundness" at which they can safely turn their backs on trade and payments restrictions. Also, their agricultural protectionism has led them to adopt trade policy measures inimical to the export interests of the underdeveloped countries; and this has probably been an even more important obstacle than their permitting their exchange situation to develop in such a way that they need trade restrictions as well as capital export controls.

Moreover, in all their commercial and financial dealings with the underdeveloped countries, the richer countries are now com-

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monly and constantly using their superior bargaining power to press the poorer countries to import commodities which they could produce themselves by putting their unutilized manpower and other resources to work or which they rightly consider that they cannot afford to import, at least not in the quantities that are urged upon them. A greater consideration shown underdeveloped countries in such matters would help bring about a very substantial improvement in their economic situation.

V

Within this general framework of the desirability of freeing trade and capital movements in the richer countries, a number of specific policy goals were proclaimed in the years during the war and immediately afterward when economic thinking and planning for concerted international action were so much more constructive, courageous and free than at present. Several policy goals were singled out and given prominent places on the agenda of the international economic organizations which were then created. What happened?

For various reasons the world market prices of the primary products, which constitute the bulk of the exports of underdeveloped countries, show very violent fluctuations from month to month and from year to year. Quite regularly, the consequent big changes in their export incomes amount to sums many times bigger than all foreign aid and credit put together. Measures to stabilize these prices would, therefore, be very powerful means to improve the economic conditions in underdeveloped countries. On balance, such measures would also be in the interest of the richer countries —both for internal reasons and because of their commercial interests in keeping the import demands of the underdeveloped countries on a steady level. They represent, therefore, an "aid" which need not cost the richer countries anything. In spite of this, there has been practically no progress toward concerted international action in the field of commodity price stablization.

There are several reasons for this discouraging outcome. In my opinion, the purely technical and financial difficulties implied in international price stabilization, though real enough, have not been

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the main inhibition. More important has been the lack of zeal and ability on the part of the underdeveloped countries to push their interest themselves—a weak and inefficient government and administrational apparatus is unfortunately too often a main characteristic of an underdeveloped country.

The most important hindrance has, however, been the growing unwillingness on the part of the richer countries to take serious measures in this field. One factor determining their attitude has been the fear—in my view, not altogether reasonable—that they might be inveigled into supporting schemes with fixed prices permanently above true "equilibrium" levels. But, in addition, there are in all of the richer countries special interests in preserving the speculative character of commodity markets. Those special interests may seem unimportant, but when the overwhelming majority of people feel indifferent these interests generally swing the decisions. For the international and common interests have no organized pressure groups in our protective welfare states. Rather, there are always in our countries nationalistic emotions which can be played on by the special interests bent upon preventing positive action in the larger interest.

I know of no illustration of our economic nationalism and our lack of internationalism more striking than the following. In the richer countries we have accepted it as almost a self-evident duty to take effective measures to give the small minority of farmers higher prices than would establish themselves in the market, while, at the same time, we have cold-heartedly refused to consider attempts merely to stabilize commodity prices in the international market—without raising them—in the interest of the great masses of people in the underdeveloped countries. And we have done this even though an international stabilization of prices of primary products would, on balance, have been in our interests too.

A second policy goal within the general trade field was that of international control of industrial and shipping cartels. It would be of great importance to the underdeveloped countries and would, at the same time, not ask for any real sacrifices on the part of the richer countries but, on balance, rather be to their advantage. Nevertheless, here again proposals for action are, for

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very much the same reasons, being quietly buried. Measures against restrictive business practices are taken in most of the richer countries individually; but in the international markets, cartels have so far been given free play. At least in Western Europe it would be looked upon as a strange and almost subversive thought that the foreigner should be protected from having to pay whatever he can be forced to pay.

Another postwar policy goal was to make special efforts to introduce a counter-cyclical force in the capital market. Indirectly, the underdeveloped countries would also benefit very much by genuine progress in policies aimed at achieving greater stability in the economic relations, and closer economic integration, of the richer countries. I am thinking, for instance, of the bold schemes for international business stabilization which were made during the war and in the first years after the war, all of which have virtually been abandoned.

Taken together, new policies along such lines as these could be of vastly greater importance to the underdeveloped countries and the world than capital aid and technical assistance, even if the latter programs were increased considerably in scope and were brought together within a rational international framework. But by now the lowest level has been reached in expectations of progress toward concerted international action with respect to all these special problems in the field of trade and capital movements.

VI

It is my opinion that we must press harder and more intelligently for action on all these vital fronts. It is also my conviction that broadly these reforms are in our common interest, in the interest of the richer countries as well as the underdeveloped ones. And this belief is not founded on the old idea of interest harmony as it has been passed on from the philosophies of natural law and utilitarianism, out of which economic theory branched off some two hundred years ago. Harmony of interests is definitely not resulting now from the natural play of the market forces. The harmony I believe in is a "created harmony," shaped by policy measures aimed at the common good.

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In the last two generations the few richer countries in the world have all transformed themselves individually into welfare democracies. To a large extent, this has been the outcome of intentional state policies. These policies, and the whole economic and social development in those countries, have been directed by the ideal, which was a living social force in them, that when we move toward equality of opportunity this leads to social peace and economic progress. In the course of this development two questions were continuously asked: first, whether equalization of opportunities would not, by leveling the leading classes, hamper economic progress; second, whether the poorer classes, by being relieved of the pressure of poverty, would not lose the incentive to work and save. The static concepts behind these questions heavily dominated economic thinking until quite recently. Likewise, the reforms were regularly advocated merely in the static terms of social justice.

Only as an afterthought, and as an inference from our assembled practical experience in the actual political and social processes, has the dynamic theory gradually emerged that the equalization of opportunities, as between regions, classes and individuals, was as much needed for raising the productivity of the nations toward their true potentialities as it was needed for satisfying the demands for justice inherent in our ideal of a social democracy.

I believe our economic and social theorists, when now facing the wider problem of creating a world welfare democracy, should learn from our experiences at home: reforms, when wisely planned and courageously set into action, are likely to be paying propositions even for those who are better off and who, at the start, are asked to share their privileges with, and surrender their monopolies to, those who are less fortunately placed initially. What we are reaching for is not a static redistribution between those who are rich and those who are poor, but an "equalization upward" where, as opportunities become more equally shared, virtually all become more wealthy, and not only in money.

A sudden big income equalization on a world scale is both an impossible and, I am inclined to believe, an unimportant objective. But certainly, as part of a much wider complex of economic policies, we need, for economic as well as social reasons, policy measures

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which imply a limited income redistribution. This is the aid part of a program to improve the situation of the underdeveloped countries. If, however, the aid is put to good use—and particularly if, in addition to aid, commercial and financial policies are reshaped in the manner I have suggested—the effect will be to help the underdeveloped countries to achieve a substantial and fairly rapid increase in per capita output.

A higher productivity is not only possible but, indeed, is the normal and natural outcome of reforms in the interest of the poor. This is so because productivity is an outgrowth of the level of living, and because a social process is dominated not by equilibrial reactions, as in our static theoretical models, but by reciprocal and circular causation and a cumulation of changes. The rising economic and social levels in the underdeveloped countries will have favorable repercussions in the industrially advanced countries which paid for the aid in the first place, and the final outcome will be that the aid is a real burden to nobody, but becomes compensated—more than compensated—by the widening of the markets and a general rise in productivity and incomes.

A social scientist is biased in the direction of rationalism. In spite of all the fateful dispensations of emotionalism in this generation, he clings to the belief that if knowledge of the dynamics of social processes could be broadly disseminated among the people, and if it could be clearly demonstrated how in the "created harmony" emanating from intentional and purposive reforms we all have a true interest in each other's advance, the political basis would be laid for concerted policy actions in the international field. Popular attitudes in the richer countries would need to be altered so as to support not only more aid to the underdeveloped countries but, more importantly, reforms of the richer countries' regular commercial and financial policies. I see clearly the immense difficulties to overcome in changing attitudes as radically as would be necessary if the underdeveloped countries' aroused ambitions are not to be thwarted. But I am also aware of the huge risks our present course provides.

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The New Compassion in the American Novel

EDMUND FULLER

NEVER A GLYCERIN TEAR shed to the tune of "Hearts and Flowers" in a Victorian tear-jerker was so sloppy and false as is the weird sentimentality in some of the roughest and supposedly most "realistic" of modern novels. An inverted pathos has sprung up among what Maxwell Geismar has called "the brutes." For some years, authors, publishers and reviewers have kicked around the word *compassion* so loosely that its meaning may become corrupted and lost.

The present decline of compassion (which also is the decline of tragedy) began in an odd and relatively innocuous way. It started with the vogue of the lovable bums, and at first it was no worse than a foolish romanticizing of the scalawag: a beery, brass-rail sentimentality. This pattern was not completely new—we see a bit of it in all the classical picaros—but never had it been so elaborated as it began to be in the thirties. It had charm and appeal, at times, dealing good-naturedly with human foibles. It is possible to look affectionately upon such people, as with Wilkins Micawber, if you keep your head and don't elevate a mood into a philosophy.

Some writers, especially those talented men William Saroyan, in *The Time of Your Life*, and John Steinbeck, in several books from his early *Tortilla Flat* to his recent *Sweet Thursday*, developed the lovable bums into the fallacy of "the beautiful little people"—which almost always meant the shiftless, the drunk, the amoral and the wards of society. A corollary was implied: if you didn't love these characters, you were a self-righteous bigot, hard of heart by contrast to the author's compassion and love for the common clay

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of humanity. Conversely, these books imply another world of respectable and economically stable people who vaguely are not nice, not right, compared to the ineffable and intransigent "little people."

Yet some, though not all, of this stuff called itself "realistic." Its absurdities reached a point in Steinbeck's *The Wayward Bus*, which inspired John Mason Brown to one of the most searching remarks since the little boy said the emperor wasn't wearing any clothes: "If realism isn't real, then isn't it trash?"

A sinister twist came in the path some years ago, and abruptly this new soft streak lost its innocence. The lovable bum began to slip away, and in his place emerged the genial rapist, the jolly slasher, the fun-loving dope pusher. Now we see increasingly a technique of simple identification with the degraded which is miscalled compassion. It lacks the requisites for compassion as much as its subjects lack the requisites for tragedy.

What is compassion, anyhow? It means the sharing of a sorrow, a pity and sympathy, a desire to help—feeling another's pain or plight as if it were one's own, seeing "those in chains as bound with them." It applies to a man's moral as well as material or physical breakdown. In the moral realm it recognizes the sharing of all human guilt, the potentiality of evil in the most blameless, the element which the Christian calls original sin and the analyst calls the id. In the traditions of both tragic and pathetic literature there is an abundance of authentic compassion.

A large and generous view of life and a distinct standard of values are necessary to establish compassion. These need not, of course, be formulated, but at least you must be able to discriminate between a happy state and an unhappy one; you must be able to discern the difference between a man destroyed through his own fault and one destroyed through no fault of his own, with all the delicate gradations possible between. You must set a moral value on man's actions and circumstances. Compassion is not a suspension of judgment, it is a judgment tempered and chastened according to the facts under some definable theory of the human condition. Compassion is discernment of the gap between the man that is and the potential man that was.

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Two old saws contain much of the truth about the compassionate view of life and, incidentally, remove its unavoidable judgments from any taint of smugness: "There but for the grace of God go I," and "To understand all is to forgive all." How these apply to the phony compassion in many current novels we shall see.

In the enthusiastic critical reception of *From Here to Eternity*, culminating in the National Book Award, the word *compassion* was sprayed all over the scene by the critical fraternity. The writing of James Jones may well have many admirable attributes, but I do not see wherein compassion is one of them.

Like all the other pseudo-tough young writers engaged in this peculiar transposition of values, Mr. Jones is shamelessly and laughably sentimental. This is missed by some simply because he isn't sentimental about Mother or Dad or the Pure Girl or Jesus or Darling Babies. Instead, he is sentimental about incorrigible antisocial and criminal types and whores. He is said to be compassionate toward these—which is as you choose to think. Certainly, though, if you are *not* one of these you may expect short shrift from Mr. Jones, for he has precious little compassion for anyone else.

If you can wipe Mr. Jones's tears out of your eyes, you will see that the famous Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt is not a social being, nor are his buddies. Prewitt is not the most extreme of them, but he is the "hero." His type is a social hazard. Since many men have endured as much in the way of background experience as Prewitt did, he is no more the helpless creation of something outside him than anyone else. His character is partly, even largely, self-created, as is true, for practical purposes, of most of us.

But, says Compassionate Jones: Prewitt, Maggio, Stark and the others, drinking and whoring, knifing and slugging, rolling homosexuals, defying authority indiscriminately and eternally, are good, good people. All authority, all sobriety, all the rest of the world, are bad. He is vindictive against the socially adjusted or constructive. If you listen to him long you'll be ashamed to be sober and out of jail. This is not compassion; it is paranoia.

And this is why some of us regard *From Here to Eternity* not as a controlled work of art, but as a clinically interesting projection of personalities by a man endowed with genuine gifts for narrative

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and pictorial characterization. Whether we are right or wrong, the minority holding this opinion must state it, in the face of reviews, sales and awards.

The most interesting case I've seen since Jones is a first novel of some seasons ago by George Mandel, *Flee the Angry Strangers.* It made no special mark in hard covers, though circulated widely in paper reprint. I choose it as a peculiarly apt illustration of a tendency which can be demonstrated in variations in many novels. In it the false compassion takes the evermore common form of complete negation of values and denial of responsibility. The author's interpreter, in the book, looks on the world of dope addiction and shrugs away any helpful intervention on these grounds: "Who the hell am I to stop it? Who am I to decide about people? There's no harm in anything. You can't stop any of that. You have no right. Nobody has."

With this view, he concludes that all the fallen are the result of repressive nay-saying by the unfallen. (Why the unfallen didn't fall is never explained.) And again emerges the teary slobbering over the criminal and degraded, the refusal to assign any share of responsibility to them, and a vindictive lashing out against the rest of the world.

This particular "compassion" is the sentimental pretense that things are not what they are. Mr. Mandel's eighteen-year-old heroine, addicted to drugs, sexually delinquent, mother of an illegitimate child, finally has been put in an institution. Mr. Mandel supports her in the outraged lament, "My own mother put me there."

As this girl escapes, steps up the dope, takes on more men indiscriminately, and tries a little prostitution, she can still say, reproachfully, "You think I'm a tramp."

"Shucks, kid," is the general attitude of the new-compassion boys, "just going around and doing everything a tramp does, doesn't make a good, sweet, clean little kid like you a tramp."

In short, the new compassion is the denial that men and women are what their consistent, voluntary (and involuntary) patterns of action make them. The elements of true tragedy and compassion—the fall from a standard, responsibility however extenuated, repent-

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ance, and the struggle for rehabilitation—are not in this philosophy.

What is wrong with Mandel's approach to his delinquent heroine? He feels sorry for her—don't we all? Can he deny that she has become a tramp? Compassion is to see precisely what she is (which he evades), analyze how she got that way (which he distorts or oversimplifies), and seek for what can be done to rehabilitate her (which he refuses). This is the weakness of many such novels.

It is no casual matter that authors, publishers and reviewers should blandly accept such attitudes as compassion. It may be the most unwholesome and dangerous single symptom in modern literature, for as there is nothing more appealing than the cloak of compassion, there is nothing more treacherous when it is false. In literary art, this is the absolute end product of ethical relativism. No valid compassion can exist without a moral framework. The Greeks had such a framework. The Judaeo-Christian tradition has one. Only in recent years, and so far only in a handful of writers, especially in the French existentialist movement, has the moral framework quietly and completely dropped away. This new compassion is a danger to the art of writing, and a deadly one when it is accepted on its claims.

These writers are trapped in a terrible contradiction. Their form of compassion is not to blame, and they find that they cannot portray life at all without assigning blame. Therefore, since their concept of compassion will not permit them to blame anything upon the criminal, the degraded and the destroyed, they blame everything upon the noncriminal, the nondegraded and the undestroyed. It is a kind of counter-puritanism.

The irony is that these writers have no intermediate ground. Many so-called good people are responsible for the destruction of others. All of us are involved in the guilt of mankind. Throughout literature and life we see it. But you have to have a standard of values in order to see how corrupt, warped, misdirected values destroy themselves and others. That's the realm of tragedy, of individuality and subtlety. If you have no values, and see no values, you cannot distinguish the hypocrite from the virtuous man, the self-righteous man from the genuinely good, the Uriah Heep from

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the man of honest humility. The world contains them all, and more. Beginning by seeing only bad, the new compassion ends by inverting it to be a curious "good" to which normal life stands as a kind of "bad." "Evil, be thou my good": this is the key to our paranoid novelists.

The existentialists and those influenced by them, and many who unconsciously have been practicing existentialists without the fancy jargon, portray human depravity and degradation without comment, presumably as they see it. This is a kind of moral neutralism. It makes no judgment, on the grounds that there is no judgment. But these writers show phenomena without meaning. If we give depravity no significance we imply that it has no significance. Far from being neutral or unmoralistic or undogmatic, this is a highly partisan, positive philosophical position indeed.

The conflict between good and evil is a common thread running through all the great literature and drama of the world, from the Greeks to ourselves. The principle that conflict is at the heart of all dramatic action, when illustrated by concrete example, almost always turns up some aspect of the struggle between good and evil.

The idea that there is neither good nor evil—in any absolute moral or religious sense—is widespread in our times. There are various relativistic, behavioristic standards of ethics. If they even admit the distinction between good and evil they see it as a relative matter and not as the whirlwind of choices at the center of living. In any such state of mind, conflict can be only a petty matter at best, lacking true universality. The acts of the evildoer and of the virtuous man alike become dramatically neutralized. Imagine *Crime and Punishment* or *The Brothers Karamazov* if Dostoevsky had thought that the good and the evil in those books were wholly a relative matter and had had no conviction about them.

You can't have a vital literature if you ignore or shun evil. What you get then is the goody-goody in place of the good, the world of Pollyanna. *Cry, the Beloved Country* is a great and dramatic novel because Alan Paton, in addition to his skill of workmanship, sees with clear eyes both good and evil, differentiates them, pitches them into conflict with each other, *and takes sides*. He sees that the native boy, Absalom Kumalo, who has murdered, cannot be judged justly

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without taking into account the environment that has partly shaped him. But he sees, too, that Absalom the individual, not society the abstraction, did the act and has responsibility. Mr. Paton understands mercy. He knows that this precious thing is not shown on sentimental impulse, but after searching examination of the realities of human action. Mercy follows a judgment; it does not precede it.

One of the novels of the talented Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, is full of motion, full of sensational depravities, and is a crashing bore. For the book recognizes no good, admits no evil, and is coldly indifferent to the moral behavior of its characters. It is a long shrug. Such a view of life is nondramatic, negating the vital essence of drama.

Charles Jackson is a novelist unmistakably sensitive and gifted. His novels are terrifyingly preoccupied with modes of demoralization and collapse. They depict these faithfully, but take in no other aspects of life at all. He admires and partly emulates Dostoevsky, but he does not appear to realize that the difference between the dark tones of his own work and those in Dostoevsky's novels is precisely that Dostoevsky took sides. He was not neutral in the conflict between good and evil. The gulf fixed between Jackson and Dostoevsky is not one of literary craftsmanship but of moral sense.

Dostoevsky views Raskolnikov with compassion, for he sees and interprets for us the moral fallacy that entrapped Raskolnikov. If there were no such fallacy, if Dostoevsky had perceived no moral standard to be warped, Raskolnikov (whose name means "the dissenter") would have been a mere Russian Robert E. Lee Prewitt, and there would have been no tragedy. The great depth of *Crime and Punishment* (the very title states it) is that both Dostoevsky the author and Raskolnikov the created character are conscious of the moral dilemma.

Dreiser, in *An American Tragedy*, sees Clyde Griffiths with compassion because he shows us how the boy has been undermined by a shoddy set of material values and is poorly equipped to appraise them. Dreiser sees the good and evil in the American era he portrays; the social tragedy is that there are those like Clyde who can see them only dimly, if at all.

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The original muckrakers portrayed horrors with a fierce indignation against the social injustice they saw as causative, if sometimes too simply. So it is in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. But these men were reformers. Their eyes were fixed upon a good of which they saw men deprived, and which they were determined passionately to restore. In the writers we are discussing, the vision of the good is lost. They stare hypnotized upon the mess as if they conceived it to be the sole, or total, reality of life.

Many novelists of talent other than those named are more or less involved in the confusion of identification with compassion, in the process of representing a facet of life as if it were the whole and of presenting phenomena without the evaluation which the greatest of writers, and even the mere reformers, never have shrunk from offering. They feel that by detailing innumerable horrors without visible revulsion they are somehow demonstrating sympathy. They conceive their virtue as not casting stones at the sinner, but many cast stones in other directions, and some reverse the words of Jesus to say, in effect, "Neither do I condemn you—go and sin some more."

National Book Award juries have shown an affinity for new-compassion novels. In addition to *From Here to Eternity*, they have given the palm to Nelson Algren's *The Man With the Golden Arm* and Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*. In Algren's skillful work, including the recent *A Walk on the Wild Side*, there may be sympathy, but it remains the one-sided sympathy of the new compassion. The promising talent of Norman Mailer has collapsed utterly into this genre in *Barbary Shore* and *The Deer Park*. Leonard Bishop's novels belong there, and Irving Shulman's at least lean that way. The total catalogue of writers and books within this category would be burdensome to compile.

Some borderline books of the kind we are discussing are no more than crying novels or—to be more blunt about a few—sniveling novels. A vast and blurred self-pity is appliquéd upon the fictional characters—as if to do this represented compassion in the author. In some cases it is simple transference of the author's own self-pity, as shown by the inability to see or move beyond it in portraying life. In some, the assiduous stockpiling of depravities has

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an unmistakable element of reveling, of wallowing, of bad-boy's glee. Many of these writers cry, "Look, Ma, I'm blaspheming."

There are merely fitful glimmerings of life and agitated motions in the books of such novelists. The vital questions which would bring them to profound life have been nullified. You cannot say of their attitude toward their characters, "To understand all is to forgive all." They see much but understand nothing. They do not understand all—they *devalue* all. They do not forgive all. They do not forgive anything. They say there is nothing to forgive. They take murder, rape, perversion and say, belligerently, "What's wrong with it?"

You cannot say of their characters, "There but for the grace of God go I," because you cannot find in their work any chain of moral cause and effect by which *you* could get from where *you* are to where their characters are (as you can in Dostoevsky and Paton). The placement of these characters in their situations is arbitrary and mechanical, as is the inversion of good and bad.

The irony of ironies is that these are not the most compassionate, but the most vindictive writers working today; not the most humble, but the most arrogant; not the binders of the wounds of their fallen brothers, but the destroyers of the social order. "Down! Down everybody!" they scream. "Down with us all!"

Dostoevsky anticipated this moral phenomenon as he did so many others. These paranoid novels are books that some of his brilliantly studied characters might have written. Ivan Karamazov said, "Everything is permitted," and Smerdyakov, acting accordingly, murdered. Raskolnikov saw moral law as inapplicable to some men, and acting accordingly, murdered. Ideas are more than abstractions, Dostoevsky shows us again and again. Ideas have consequences. God preserve us from the consequences of the ideas implicit in the novels of the new compassion.

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Peepers

MELVILLE CANE

Over marsh and swamp and pond
Fabulous April waves her wand!
Winter dissolves.

Lowlands evolve,
Shed their frozen lethargy,
Seethe with panting urgency.

The countryside is rife
With life,
Abounds
With rising sounds.

From every luscious soggy bog
The froglets fling their piping song.

Like frisky youngsters out of school,
Their trebles shrill from pool to pool,
Their peeps explode and dynamite
The innocent frontiers of the night.

✪ MELVILLE CANE, lawyer and poet, has contributed articles, fiction and verse to leading magazines. *And Pastures New,* a collection of his poetry, was published last year.

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The Academy and the "Enquiry Squad"

GORDON KEITH CHALMERS

An address which was to have been presented at the annual Convocation of the Graduate School of Brown University in June of 1956.

THE ACADEMY VANISHES, but like the lady, she must be somewhere on the train. Universities and colleges look strong, what with their weathering of the depression and sloshing their way through the inflation. Professors' salaries are approaching preinflation buying power, industry and foundations have a new love of educational institutions, government has not mauled them as much as it might, and there are good students aplenty. But seen strictly from within and against a standard of scholarship, science, and the disciplined imagination necessary to them, how strong are these institutions as academies, as places from which one may be "led out" into a life dedicated to the ideas of justice, mercy, liberty, humility?

Universities are expanding, but in some of them the study of the liberal arts and sciences is shrinking. Technology thrives; a few scientists of great competence believe the thoroughgoing inquiry into physical nature and mathematics has been reduced. In the schools there is less rather than more mathematics and science, less and not more of an attempt to master the tools necessary to the responsible study of man and human affairs, as in languages. Industrial and governmental support of universities was never so lavish, yet most of it is for training, not education; and despite

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pious orations about science and scholarship, it is not these necessaries to our spiritual and national well-being but the need for armament, industrial development, and manipulation of opinion which too often motivate great gifts and appropriations. Since the war, the strong universities and colleges have grown stronger; they are now, perhaps, more truly academies than they were. Whether many of the weaker ones devote greater and better resources and energy to the central task of science, the humanities and social science than they have in the past, is a question. Whether by 1984 our country will enjoy the blessings of an imaginative and effective academy will depend largely on you and your contemporaries in the other graduate schools.

I assume that you will do your particular job well: that you will produce substantial essays and monographs in your proper specialty, that the very liveliness of your research and writing will add life to your profession, and that as teachers, for instance, you will grow in the teacher's skill of making clear and interesting to the common reader the technicalities of the subject. Let us call this your duty to history or chemistry or mathematics, whatever your subject is. There are, in addition, several duties to the academy as a whole, and it is of them that I shall speak. None of these, of course, can be worthily performed unless you do well in your own chosen field. The suggestions which I shall make refer both to the manner in which you imagine your own special subject, the way in which you approach and expound it, as well as to several problems concerning the nature of liberal thought, of the university and a school, which merit your earnest and most imaginative attention. Practically, the academy in America will succeed or fail according to the validity and clarity of the conception of it in the minds, and evident in the performance, of scholars and scientists. It will depend on this inward understanding and also upon your own success in explaining and demonstrating to the public at large what the proper aim and virtue of a university or college truly is.

Have you yet gone far enough in your own subject to be able to know the difference between its liberal and its illiberal treat-

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ment? You have perhaps noticed in my title a phrase from Robert Frost's playful poem entitled "Departmental":

An ant on the table cloth
Ran into a dormant moth
Of many times his size.
He showed not the least surprise.
His business wasn't with such.
He gave it scarcely a touch,
And was off on his duty run.
Yet if he encountered one
Of the hive's enquiry squad
Whose work is to find out God
And the nature of time and space,
He would put him onto the case.

To find out God and the nature of time and space. Problems for the liberal mind indeed! Time and space, so effectively publicized by the popularizers of Professors Einstein, Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead and Russell, have been generally considered for a long time to be the special possession of mathematics, and none can deny that mathematics has enlarged both the highly trained and the popular imagination as to what time and space may be. But here is a conjecture about the nature of time by a contemporary thinker who approaches the problem in nonmathematical terms. It has to do with time understood or misunderstood by my generation, which in its sophomore year wrote off eternity; which in its later years perhaps saw a headline in the *Times*: "Soul Stages Comeback, Prominent Philosophers Agree Here."

If we have made a home of time
That was designed to travel in,
And meditation gives our prime
No self-discovered discipline,
Ask not the simple experts why
We advertise with joyless mind
That peace is in security,
And lack the leisure to be kind!

To be useful, research, writing, conjecture and reflection must be specific, localized and small. It is not easy to determine whether in truth it does the proper work of the "enquiry squad." Yet the question should be asked perennially: Is this quest related to the

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ultimate question of the nature of the physical world or the human world? No young researcher and few mature ones are likely to be able to give a definitive answer to that question; but the question should always be asked, and even the young inquirer should be able to have a hunch about the answer.

A question equally frustrating and equally necessary to the scientist and scholar is the unanswered one of Pilate: What is *truth*? Universities have great difficulty with this word, partly because it gives everyone a bad time, and partly because our century has not distinguished its colloquial from its religious usage. For example, Arthur Bestor, a distinguished American historian and able defender of scholarship in the public schools, justifies all universities by quoting Christ: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." His argument is that a republic needs and likes freedom, that all authors of articles in the learned and scientific journals are seeking the truth, that the whole university is a search for truth; truth makes you free; so the public should support the university. There are two fallacies here. The researcher is usually concerned not with truth but with facts or alleged facts, and usually trivial and often utterly insignificant ones, some of which will be scrapped, some of which surprisingly will come in to support new evidence. Even the genuine scientists among the university researchers are probably, as Ambassador Conant said in *Modern Science and Modern Man,* concerned not with truth or a map of the cosmos or a picture or a representation of reality, but merely with new strategies which for a period of years may prove useful to science in its quest for still newer and more useful strategies or hypotheses to displace them. That is not truth, whatever may be the mysterious and ineluctable reality to which Christ referred in his sentence. The second fallacy lies in the fact that Christ said *know* and the universities say *search*. The modern university says: Ye shall search after facts, some of them utterly trivial, or, if you are really on your job, after hypotheses or strategies, or after what really happened or what really was meant. It implies that the search in itself will make you—what? free?—and perhaps a full professor. It is, of course, true that the proper work of the academy will indeed

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make men free, or at least be a light to their feet. What that proper work is will be as much your concern as a scientist or scholar as will any particular quest of science or scholarship on which you embark.

The word *reality* is no less slippery than the word *truth*, except that it has not been quite so well greased by the theologians. It is useful for the scholar to ask himself: What is the reality which I seek? Until he turns metaphysician, the physical and natural scientist has little trouble with the word *real*, sometimes substituting for it the adjectives *verifiable, objective* and *warrantable.* The late George Sarton speaks of being "right in conformity with nature." In his most recent book, Mr. Conant describes the search of the whole university as "a search for warranted beliefs," designating scientific knowledge as a warranted belief.

Any claim on the part of universities to the virtues of the New Testament should be rigorously suspect, and Mr. Conant has never, to my knowledge, in his published works made or implied such a claim. Mr. Bestor's notion is the usual one that whatever its object, university search brings freedom. But as we know, and as the German and Japanese universities of the thirties showed, it can also destroy freedom. It would be fair and not immodest to state for the genuine academy that the quest, the re-examination, rigorous debate and testing of beliefs does contribute to liberty if these beliefs themselves, however poorly discovered and understood at present, appear to be durable and to be real in the sense that we know liberty to be real. Warrantable beliefs would by definition have such durability, and, as Mr. Conant says, they are the proper business of universities. But we should honestly ask ourselves: How much of the intellectual activity of so-called universities is truly dedicated to the criticism, establishment and improvement of warrantable beliefs? We must now make a sharp and radical distinction between the orders of knowledge. Dr. Sarton wrote in 1954:

> The only part of a philosophical system which may be said to be true is its scientific foundation, if it be sound, objective and verifiable. The rest may be more or less plausible, but it is not convincing, the best proof thereof being that there is no universal agreement concerning any system of philosophy.

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In the field of science, the situation is not simply different but absolutely different.

Our greatest historian of science here voiced the error of most of the higher learning of the twentieth century. The terms *objective, verifiable* and *sound* are now reserved for science. Mr. Conant almost agrees with him, but not quite. He says, "All theologians who as scholars have been engaged in the quest for *warranted* beliefs must be honored as dwellers in the citadel of learning." But of the poet and the artist he says, "I shall not attempt to maintain that they are engaged in a quest for warranted beliefs," but only for "a warranted interpretation of man's emotional experiences," for in the experience with which the poet and the artist are concerned "the emotional content is . . . of prime importance."

Philosophy and poetry are either absolutely different from science or largely different, the key to the difference being emotion. Speaking of religious beliefs, Mr. Conant says, "Unlike the conceptual schemes of the sciences, the beliefs in question are not an extension of the common-sense ideas which enabled primitive man to manipulate inanimate nature." True. But they and poetry and other arts are precisely an extension of the common-sense beliefs which have enabled men to manage themselves. "A new broom sweeps clean." "A stitch in time saves nine." "A fool and his money are soon parted." "I don't know why he hates me; I never did anything for him!" "Pride goeth before a fall." "Hubris invites Nemesis." "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out." "Nothing can make injustice just but mercy." What are these laws of our nature, these principles of humanity, but the central stuff of poetry, the ideas and the beliefs which make drama and all dramatic poetry, fiction and all durable stories possible? Emotion, yes; but who would say that mere feeling is all or even primary in, let us say, the *Antigone* or in *Samson Agonistes*—"Calm of mind all passion spent," "Samson hath quit himself like Samson," "Nothing is here for tears"—or in Shakespeare's "The rest is silence" after the death of Hamlet?

Both Mr. Conant and Dr. Sarton have been seeking the radical

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distinction necessary to your understanding of the full business of the academy. Dr. Sarton echoed the popular illusion of our century when he wrote that "the body of accepted scientific knowledge is the common treasure of mankind, and therefore the key of international peace." It is, in fact, half the common treasure, half the warranted belief, half the objective and useful possession of our lives.

Who will accord greater warrant or durability to the Pythagorean theorem than, let us say, to the following law of nature, that is, of *human* nature:

> The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action.

The best we can say is that so far as human apprehension is concerned, here are two orders of reality and two methods of grasping reality: the order of matter and number, and the order of man and words. Emerson's familiar rhyme comes to mind:

> There are two laws discrete,
> Not reconciled,—
> Law for man, and law for thing;
> The last builds town and fleet,
> But it runs wild,
> And doth the man unking.

Justice, due process, and the universal applicability of law are principles expressing something in our nature as men. So is the root idea of democracy—which historically and in fact is a religious idea—that each individual is free and valuable, the idea of equality before the law having come historically and in present fact from the Christian, Jewish and ancient religious idea of equality not of men among themselves, but of each man before God. These principles or ideas implicit in our nature are a part of the law for man. The law for thing includes, of course, the laws of thermodynamics, of gravitation, of surface tension, and so forth. When applied to man, as in dialectical materialism at Moscow, the law for thing *has* unkinged the man and will continue to do so. Unless we at home are thoroughly men, it will do the same to us.

Do these two orders of apprehension, these two representations

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of reality, the one through numbers and the other through words, mean that there are two truths, not one? This metaphysical question has answers. If it has an Answer—the True Word—I am inclined to believe that it cannot be simply or briefly stated. The practical question refers to the warrant for our beliefs and the durability of the account which we give ourselves of the reality of our lives. Is this reality double or single? One thing we know: In the human order there are durable and objective realities of right, courage, magnanimity, cowardice, humility, and visitations of grace which men of various centuries and separated continents have recognized and confirmed not only in their most responsible thought, but with their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. We know this in history, it is proved in ourselves and our contemporaries, and will be evident to the end of time.

When my generation were sophomores we thought that these realities described by the law for man were slogans or like the Boy Scout oath—something useful to keep order in the boarding school, easily understood by repeating the phrases, hardly the object of serious study. How foolish we were! Which would you say is the more difficult to understand, requiring longer and more exacting study: *hubris, hamartia* and *nemesis* or the calculus? I would guess from what I am told by mathematicians and what I know from a little knowledge of tragedy that deep and truly informed understanding of those references to the law for man are the more difficult; though if one considers the calculus metaphysically, I can see that its mysteries may compare in their profundity with the bottomless depths of the unknown beneath our shallow knowledge of what tragedy really is and how, for instance, it may be assimilated rather than rejected in human life.

In 1924 my brother Bill held a meeting in Sayles Hall of the student forum which he had organized in order to hear a speech by William Jennings Bryan, who was about to prosecute John Scopes in the famous Tennessee monkey-trial. With oratorical skill the great commoner amused an overflow audience of undergraduates for two hours. But when he took unfair advantage of a student questioner who was obviously troubled about science and religion,

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they booed him until, in anger, he marched down the aisle and out the door. In that controversy the science was fuzzy and so was the religion, and perhaps it is because of such exhibitions that sophisticated people now generally believe we have outlived any real conflict between them. I think we have, the accommodation of the two having begun in ancient times and been revised and improved, especially in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. We have not, however, in our decade, really faced the necessary accommodation of inquiry into the law for thing with inquiry into the law for man. Our weakness lies in the humanities, which have gone aesthetic or sociological or pseudoscientific, and yielded to ignorance and apathy in regard to solving this problem. For the academy to be strong, it is necessary for the humanities to discover anew their proper preoccupation with justice and their primary responsibility for man's understanding of it.

Most university preoccupation with what is called humanity has less concern with man himself than with the numerical measurements and other physical considerations of groups or units which just happen to be men and not cattle. These are the statistical, Gallup poll, behavioral and deterministic sections of the social sciences. The metaphors and language of this segment of university studies reveal its innocence of any deep and durable knowledge of man: *group dynamics, engineered consent* (a totalitarian term originating, sad to say, on these shores), *human engineering*, the so-called *science of human behavior*. There is no denying that a nation of 167 million souls must employ calculators and complex numbers to order, clothe, feed and protect itself. There is no denying that Justice Holmes spoke a half-truth when he said at the start of this century that the man of the future is not the black-letter man but the man of statistics. The fallacy of most statistical social science is simply its innocence of knowledge of its proper subject, man. Statistics in the hands of a humanistically informed political, economic and social thinker usually lead to an account of mankind radically different from the account of one whose whole knowledge is confined only to society and what Mandeville called "the spirit of the hive."

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The Epistle of St. James contains a gnomic sentence. It speaks of "a man beholding his natural face in a glass." "For he beholdeth himself," says the writer, "and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." But to catch up and turn to our own use St. James's metaphor, the man who may remember what manner of man he is, is he that "looketh into the perfect law of liberty." The statistical, largely contemporary and behavioral study of man is the look at our own natural face in a mirror. In it we speedily forget what manner of creature we are. The perfect law of liberty is a deeper mystery, but abiding, while our natural face is not. So mysterious is it that some of our best and bravest for five thousand years have thought and lived and died for nothing else than to find and clarify it. So paradoxical is it that our best formulations tell us that it is a subservience—a voluntary enlistment—as in the phrase of the Book of Common Prayer that speaks of God "whose service is perfect freedom."

The natural face seen in the mirror meant in the Greek the face of one as he is born into the world. The perfect law in contemporary Greek philosophy meant what Emerson meant by the law for man—the principle of our being which makes us true and responsible as men. It is by this means, not by means of our face in the mirror, that we may know ourselves, through perceiving the backward or forward, or as Robert Frost says, the downward or upward comparisons with the full stature of man. The scientific study of man, most useful in its place, and especially in medicine and psychiatry, adopts the usual assumptions of science that things are best understood in their origins. Such study has, in this century, displaced the study of man himself, his deeds and his words, which, being intended, can be understood only in the light of ends. Virtue has been reduced to utility and our human nature has been Kinseyized—to the detriment of variety and privacy, and the idea of the individual and his value as an individual. The humanities when strictly studied reveal that, unlike matter, man and his deeds defy adequate description unless primary account is taken of ends, purpose, intention, *telos*. Of what use are all social statistics and records of group behavior if constructed and employed in ignor-

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ance of liberty? For to be ignorant of the nature of liberty is to be ignorant of the nature of man.

If the humanities are to re-establish their central concern for justice and its nature, we should find some other name for the engineering college courses called humanities, which are a kind of new humanities without tears. We should also dissociate the great central task of the academy from the reduction of human experience to mere generalization of ideas and "the oversimplification of moral issues." Rational systems are of limited use in the humanities; mastery of the words designating eighteenth-century categories of experience—*tragicomedy, epic, eclogue*—is of limited use. Human experience is specific, local, particular. Even when told in a long story, as a history, it remains particulate, as the late Charles Oman remarked. All you can say is that if the popes and kings and soldiers of the sixteenth century had been different men, this one braver, the other less indolent, the story would have been different.

We have been oppressed in the academy by the medieval lust for systems of knowledge. Knowledge of man is largely in scraps and bits, as in the account of Nelson's using only his blind eye on the signal for retreat. Somehow we have become ashamed of this fact, as if it were not adult or not smart to plunge deep into Chaucer for his own lively salt, or to learn what we can from any abiding decisions of the courts.

How does one gain understanding in the humanities? Logic and the syllogism are in it, but many different kinds of reason as well: "The heart hath reasons that the reason knows not of." I am sorry that Pascal used the word *heart* in that epigram, for romantics since the eighteenth century have associated the heart with tears and emotion. The mind, our whole being, has reasons unknown to *ratio*. We use them all to meditate upon something done, something decided, a great refusal, a great acceptance. Take the basis of equality before the law. Bishop Hobson phrased it: "Every person is a free and valuable child of God." You cannot argue that belief; no logic will require it as a conclusion. Most people repeat the idea as a dogma, something revealed and beyond question. But when wars and destruction threaten, dogma is a feeble defense. The his-

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toric and present fact is that exacting and relentless mastery of passages of human experience, notably in tragedy, and unremitting critical thought about such experience lead men to the conviction that this is true. Can you prove it? Not as Euclid understood proof, nor as the chemistry laboratory demonstrates it. But you can test whether it is "right in conformity with nature"—not physical nature, but human nature. Moreover, you can demonstrate the idea to the satisfaction of clear-thinking brave men, as Jean Anouilh did for the Maquis during the Nazi occupation of Paris, by retelling on the stage the story of Antigone and Creon the tyrant. In demonstrating on the stage the mysterious dignity of man as man, he also showed to his audience a reason for their faith in France.

So far I have suggested that to understand the nature and proper work of the whole academy you should distinguish between the liberal and illiberal treatment of your subject, inquire into the truth or reality sought by your own and other disciplines, consider the duality of both the subjects of our inquiry—things and men—and of the laws or principles or means of understanding the nature of each. I have also proposed that the humanities must again occupy their responsible place at the center of the academy by renewing their primary concern for justice, and by so doing provide the social sciences with the experience and perception which is prerequisite to any quantitative study of men as men and not as animals or counters.

The object of the academy is not knowledge but disciplined imagination; information is the fuel in the tanks of the ship, as necessary to its journey but no more necessary than engine, rudder, helm and loran. Where science is truly dedicated to warranted beliefs, it has been highly imaginative. For a quarter-century it has attracted more than its fair share of imagination, and it has never been squeamish about discipline. The humanities, in contrast, have indulged in a historic drunk, praising, as did the sentimentalists of the Hellenistic time and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the wild primitive lustiness of overflowing, powerful feelings. Is it any wonder that university graduates tell judges on the bench that pornography and sadism in the comics should not be controlled because Shakespeare and Chaucer were sometimes bawdy? Is it any

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wonder that the poor judge has been helpless in the face of such sophistry, his whole generation having been taught that literature and the arts are anarchic self-expression? These problems are not first of all questions of suppression and the police, but of understanding—critical understanding of the kind for which scholars and poets are responsible.

No generation can cope with these and similar problems by spying and coercion; they are the business of an education dedicated to the laws or realities of human nature. Good and bad, right and wrong, defeat and victory; whether it is truly possible, as Milton said, to love virtue, not merely respect her—these make up the solemn business of the humanities. But by nature the humanities are far from solemn. A fruitful conjecture will be concerned with joy. Religion puts it at the center of life: *sursum corda.* "Every painting," says the painter Henry Hensche, "should be an exclamation of praise." Sir Thomas Browne referred to science as the "duty of a devout and learned admiration." Galen justified physiology because it is a paean of praise. "Some count it piety," he said in his treatise on the use of the parts, "to sacrifice hecatombs of oxen to the Demiurge. I count it greater piety accurately to set down the apparent crossing of the optic nerve."

I have spoken so far of the nature of the inquiry proper to the academy. There is time for but a word about teaching, and I shall be able to refer only to its aims. The distresses of the schools and of the universities which are not really universities arise directly from the inferior aims which scholars and educators, for reasons which are well known, have taught the public to expect. It is the university philosophers who have taught the schools that society, not the individual, is the chief concern of education; it is from the universities that the school systems acquired the notion that life-adjustment is more important than reason and common sense. "I hate your 'better-adjusted than thou' attitude," says one character to another in a *New Yorker* cartoon. It may be supposed that the intellectual keeping of school is merely to teach the students to think. But experience will show that this is an inferior and inadequate aim.

Addiction to a terminology is the first loss of freedom, and the

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proper purpose of all instruction from infancy through the doctorate is to help the student find out what is important to think about and how to think about it in appropriate terms. Half the appropriate terms are numbers, the other half are words, if we eliminate the special terms of music and the plastic arts with which a very few gain sufficient competence truly to think as a painter, sculptor or musician. The law for man must be thought about, and primarily in words. We have no other means. On the human side, there are several specific ways to think. History is such a way; so is economics; so is poetry. General education usually assumes that poetry—that is, all literature—can and should be reduced to ideas, by which is meant the propositions of a syllogism. In a brilliant essay entitled "Why We Teach Poetry," Archibald MacLeish has affirmed again the ancient fact that a poem or a story is fully understood only within itself, that it is translatable neither into the words of another language, such as French to English, nor into other terms, such as the language of metaphor, which is the language of all fiction, into the language of argument. It is especially difficult for trained minds in this rationalist age to make sense out of Aristotle's statement that a poem is more nearly true than history. If the academy is to be adequately restored and strengthened, this puzzling sentence must be meditated upon by scientists as well as students of man. The reason Aristotle's statement is true is that the historian, though not nearly to the extent of the social scientist, looks into the mirror to see our natural face. The poet also holds the mirror up to nature, but he is less likely to forget what manner of creature we are, for if he has high seriousness, he is always preoccupied with the perfect law of liberty, that is, with the law of our nature as men.

I have been talking about conjectures and subjects of your own reflection which may be of use in the next twenty-five years of your lives as scholars, scientists and teachers. In conclusion I call your attention to what many believe to be a more than ordinary turning of the direction of men's thoughts, perhaps a major revision of judgment, opinion and even of standards of thought in the learned world. Those who have lived their lives in the age of John Dewey

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and Justice Holmes and hope that the prejudices of their philosophy will prevail for another fifty years have vigorously attacked for five decades the dualism which I have proposed in talking to you today. Their attack has been fruitful of many needed social reforms. Whether their polemics can now be translated into an abiding philosophy on which, in new world circumstances, we can usefully and honorably live our lives is the issue of this decade. It is specifically the issue in the great debate over the aims of public education.

Some of our most revered leaders have recently reiterated their faith in the universal applicability of science and their belief that the task of the academy is single, man being the proper subject of the law for thing. One of the master minds of the atomic bomb has said that the chief use of the humanities is that they are an anodyne for fatigue and tension, a possibility of refreshment after the serious engineering and scientific work of the day is done—as if a court, for instance, were not work of the first importance, or as if a court were the product of the law for thing, as it is, in fact, under a tyranny. Oddly enough, the statesmen and generals, beginning with Sir Winston Churchill, have been saying the opposite. Omar Bradley fears we are in danger of continuing in moral adolescence. Our defense lies not in weapons and industry, but in the discovery and establishment of justice at home and its extension by American example, precept and assistance abroad.

How long will there be an academy to be free? The humanities are weak. If the sciences are not so strong as they should be, it is because the humanities have not done their proper job, which, with science, is to show that what counts is not mere knowledge, but disciplined, reliable and vigorous imagination making use of knowledge. It is up to the humanities almost alone to reveal that it is by imagination alone, as ancient Oriental wisdom declared, that we may pierce the *maya*, the veil of illusion, and apprehend reality for our own lives, for justice, for peace. In your lifetime the academy will thrive if you make it strong from within. Where it has languished, as, for example, where academic freedom has been flagrantly violated, the cause may appear to be external, but much

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provocation has come from within, by sins of omission and commission.

Within two decades the possibility of moral maturity in the thought, judgment and taste of our country will lie in some measure in your hands. The quality of your own research and writing will influence this; so will the clarity of your teaching and the richness of your meditation upon the purpose and character of the whole academy in all its special disciplines. Whether you are a scientist or concerned with one of the human subjects, the key to your ability to convey to your colleagues, students and fellow citizens a truly mature view of human experience with which to face the problems of your time will lie in your own ability to detect what is of first concern to men and mankind, and your mastery of how to think about these great matters in their own appropriate terms. For any man truly educated, no matter what his subject or profession, will be educated to the "issues of life," and will be concerned with those issues as they are revealed in the individual.

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Tarkington and the 1920's

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

I

In the 1920's Booth Tarkington's success and fame made him seem to a vast number of readers the literary ornament of the times. F. Scott Fitzgerald's friend Edmund Wilson, for one, knew better; nevertheless, Fitzgerald, right out of Princeton, became an immediate celebrity with *This Side of Paradise*, much of which is nothing but inferior emulation of Tarkington. Now, all the literary historians know better, so much better that they ignore Tarkington lock, stock and barrel. They are unaware that in his novel *Alice Adams* Tarkington made a far more significant contribution to American fiction in the 1920's than many an admired rover of the Riviera, Paris, Provincetown and Greenwich Village could possibly have made.

Alice Adams, much lauded in its day, is sometimes referred to, if at all, as "probably his best novel." In the past it has been in part misread by critics, and I cannot find that it has ever been read with any perception of its adumbration of American society in the decade that lay ahead. *Alice Adams* was written in 1920 and published in 1921. Commentators at the time could not have foreseen its prophetic accuracy; later they did not bother. And now, momentarily, *Alice* has gone down in the general collapse of Tarkington's reputation following his death. But think of the novelists more or less Tarkington's contemporaries whose names are a part of the brightness of his era: Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, Joseph Hergesheimer, Carl Van Vechten, the somewhat younger Sinclair Lewis. Fade is on some of these, yet nobody judges it gauche to account for them; and yet, again, none of them wrote a better novel

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than *Alice Adams*. Tarkington's fellow Indianian Theodore Dreiser could not write as well as Tarkington or any of these others—he just wrote greater novels. The further exception is Willa Cather, who matched Dreiser in substance and surpassed them all in art.

Tarkington has paid the penalty of suiting his times and his huge audience too nicely; his books were charming, amusing and undisturbing. They minded their manners fatally. That *Alice Adams* escapes the mold is almost an accident, which can be analyzed in terms of its author's limitations as well as his great talents. Tarkington's biographer, James Woodress, reports that Sinclair Lewis wrote Tarkington a letter in which he said he was telling lecture audiences: "When you are considering the clever unknown youngsters, don't suppose that because he sells so enormously, Booth Tarkington can't write better than any of them." This was just after the publication of *Alice Adams*.

Years ago it was customary when anyone wrote about Booth Tarkington to make a good deal of his long, unpromising struggle as a writer; how, after Princeton, he returned to his parents' home in Indianapolis and wrote reams of rejected stories for seven years. Then, in 1899, *The Gentleman from Indiana* was published and Tarkington was made. He was thirty years old. He does not seem, after all, a major instance of delayed recognition. Furthermore, from the moment he was published he had a smashing success. *Monsieur Beaucaire* immediately followed *The Gentleman from Indiana*, and other stories and plays only increased his popularity. Throughout his long career (he died in 1946, nearing his seventy-seventh birthday) he was a famous and rich man.

Toward the end, *Life* magazine called him an old pro who could write rings around the rest of his class. And that was so. But Tarkington was not just a romancer; some of his books are less deeply meant than others, but he had always—in style, attack, material—the standards of an artist. He meant to tell the truth about such facets of American middle-class society as he knew most intimately, and he meant to tell it well. To a point his gifts were as brilliant as his outward success, and his having come so near to being a first-rate writer makes his general failure complexly interesting.

In Tarkington's heyday his busiest apologist, Robert Cortes

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Holliday, concluded with complete satisfaction that "his books are popular because of the same qualities that made their author popular as an undergraduate." At the same time, Grant Overton, conceding "most exceptional talent and even unmistakable genius," perceived that Tarkington was the victim of "largely comfortable circumstances." And now Mr. Woodress, an industrious, useful but uncritical biographer, has produced a theory of Tarkington success which is rather stunning in its simplicity. In effect, Woodress says Tarkington wrote as he pleased, and it just happened, most of the time, that what pleased Tarkington also pleased hundreds of thousands of readers. Translated, this signifies that Tarkington was a writer of complete integrity. Actually, in a way, this is true. It simply fails to examine the only question of importance: What were the values to which Tarkington's integrity adhered?

The graceful and lightly intended entertainments such as *Gentle Julia* and *Seventeen* and the three *Penrod* books are prominent on the Tarkington shelf because in them he did so skillfully what he set himself to do. They are comedies, here and there made wistful or untruthful by a point of view which is that of an older observer mostly amused and occasionally touched to nostalgic pity by the manners of youth. In every sense they are too easy. Granted that no other contemporary could do this sort of thing with Tarkington's flair, one has to note that his novels in general increasingly employed such an obsession with the child mind that a strong streak of infantilism ran through his work. He turned children and adolescents into clowns. And he did this so repeatedly that, except for *Kate Fennigate* with its solid title role, none of the many books of his last two decades adds anything to his reputation; they water it down.

I do not see why anyone should deny charm to *Monsieur Beaucaire*; a trifle, but there it is. But to determine what claims, if any, Tarkington has to a place among American novelists, all the fumbling early books and the thinly slick later ones may be forgotten; his best work falls between the time he was forty and fifty-five. I should mention one novel which comes beyond the later line, *The Plutocrat*, since both Tarkington's biographer and, before him, Van Wyck Brooks have made much of it. Brooks speaks as

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fairly for Tarkington as can be spoken, but he chose the wrong novel. *The Plutocrat* has in the Tarkington canon an air of importance for its conception of the successful American businessman as the modern Roman, its juxtaposition (denied by Tarkington but most unfortunately made by everybody else) as an answer to Lewis' best novel, *Babbitt*, and its summation, so to speak, of the Tarkington attitude (admiring and affectionate) toward capitalism. All this, as conception, is in the book, even its availability as a defense of George F. Babbitt; yet in substance it is childish—Earl Tinker is created on a vaudeville level and illustrates how the "eternal boy" was ruining Tarkington's adult characterizations; Mme. Momoro is as embarrassingly melodramatic as a movie notion of an international vamp, and such interpolations as the sneering attacks on modern art and poetry are utterly stale. The whole thing, one of the worst of his novels, amounts to a frightening exposure of what happens when an old pro advances the "unrelenting pressure of environment" in the guise of intellectual conviction.

Again setting aside *Alice Adams*, the three most important Tarkington novels are *The Turmoil*, *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *The Midlander*. Loosely, they form a trilogy. Indianapolis begets their common scene, and they portray the growth of a Midwestern city in various eras. One always remembers from them the very fine atmospherics, so typical of America, of the changing city: the fall and rise of particular families in the economic scale, the altering of neighborhoods—the old brownstone mansion descended to Board and Room signs, the thrust of dirty shops and glistening gas stations where, a generation before, comfortable householders played croquet in the evening dusk by the iron stag on the lawn, and the "new developments" pushing out beyond the ever-swelling business district. All three novels evoke that mutability of the American city, at once healthy and vulgar and saddening. No other novelist better recorded the pre-Depression, twentieth-century *feel* of the American city; no other, probably, as well.

Nevertheless, such passages in those three novels are minor and repetitious. Though the three have a dignity and substance absent from *The Plutocrat*, again their conception is thinned in the execution. Woodress' contention is indefensible, that "Tarkington pulled

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no punches in attacking the scramble for wealth and its attendant ugliness," if he applies it, as he does, to any book but *Alice Adams*; he applies it to *The Turmoil* and these others. It is true that Tarkington nostalgically mourned the changes which industrial growth created, but what he set alongside this attitude was not an anti-materialist satire or poetic passion—rather, the three novels lose all critical power by seeking the comfortable adjustments of the new materialism. Tragedy in the Tarkington view means loss of money and position; and from Georgie Amberson on down, Tarkington took care to "save" his characters by restoring them to the road toward prosperity. Dan Oliphant dies in *The Midlander*, but he dies in the high cause of materialistic progress; and in *The Turmoil* the sensitive Bibbs Sheridan is whipped into line in the same high cause. This easy acceptance of things as they are, coupled with Tarkington's evasion of writing anything you would not care to have your daughter read—as they used to say—leaves his most ambitious work disastrously vitiated. "One cannot be both a gentleman and an artist," said Bernard Shaw. This is what Booth Tarkington tried to be. The great laying-on of hands in his career had been the repeated blessing of William Dean Howells. A blessing from the author of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* need not be regrettable; however, it is the necessity of each new generation of writers to freshen and extend, if not to combat, the traditions of the elders. Tarkington was content to rest within the gentility congenial to Howells.

There is a well-established line of the American novel of mild social commentary. One way of isolating it is the observation that Frank Norris, Dreiser and their kind do not fit it. Mrs. Wharton almost belongs, and she suggests Henry James's kinship, made remote partly by a preoccupation with other facets of society but largely by greater intricacy of method. The line can be drawn unwaveringly from Howells through Tarkington and Lewis (so it seems, now Lewis' total view is examined) to John P. Marquand. The differences among the novels of these men are chiefly of fashion and generation; they are not fundamental differences. Satire, humor and evaluation all tend to be clever and compromised.

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The youngsters in the line always recognize the elders, but not always vice versa. James Woodress says that Sinclair Lewis, some years after his generous praise of Tarkington, visited Indianapolis and expressed a desire to meet the great man of the town. "Tarkington made no effort to see him," and wrote Julian Street "he had always classed Lewis 'among the people I don't want to sit down with.' " The remark is symbolic. There were too many people, things, subcutaneous truths, Tarkington did not want to sit down with. I don't know how one can avoid the charge of snobbery. An unimaginative thing in any human being, snobbery is crippling in an artist. Nevertheless, it is the underlying explanation of his one unqualified success, *Alice Adams*. There have been odder paradoxes.

II

The sense of small world, of neighborhood—a sense indigenous to Tarkington's better novels—is precisely what one first of all recalls from American middle-class childhood in the 1920's. Almost everybody you knew lived within a few blocks. For all of us the sun came up over Main Street, the clock in the brick tower of the school rang the hours above our houses, and we converged upon the school along cracked tar sidewalks under the shade of elms and maples.

There was the felt rhythmic round of the year. Falling leaves in the swifter dark, then the deep snows, then spring again. On summer nights the lights glowed on screened-in porches, sometimes as late as nine o'clock; after that there might be low voices, talking and laughing, where a daughter of seventeen or so had a caller, and the regular chain-creak of a hammock hidden beyond the rusty hydrangea bushes dim in the arclight on the silent street. This in a hundred thousand American towns and cities was the early weather of that famous decade—this and the grownups' go-getting, getting ahead, keeping up with the Joneses, the fevered materialism of which the children were not unaware. This was, for incomparably more people than Spain or Paris or the Ritz could possibly be, the 1920's. Spain and Paris and the Ritz are all very well in their way; but I am speaking now of general experience among the

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generality of the people. *Alice Adams* records best of all our novels that experience, and in symbol foreshadows the crash which demolished its brief world.

The time in *Alice Adams* is contemporary with the novel's composition, 1920. We know this because Arthur Russell, the well-connected young man so attracted to Alice, is a fairly recent veteran of the World War; he has come to the Midwestern city to settle down and begin a business career. As in *The Turmoil* and *The Magnificent Ambersons,* this is a virile, expanding community, and Alice's convalescent father, Virgil Adams, is aware of its vigor as he intermittently drowses and wakes in his bedroom through the night of April 30.

Although we do not cross the hall until the second chapter and meet the pretty daughter around whom all the action is to revolve, the first chapter sounds the theme of the book; we know within these ten pages that Mrs. Adams habitually nags her husband to leave his lifelong, modest job with the J. A. Lamb Company and somehow to launch at fifty-five into something that will make much more money, and we know her reiterant reason for nagging him is "you owe it to your children." In a word, the theme *is* money.

Much later in the story we discover that Mrs. Adams' specific plan is for her husband to set himself up as a glue manufacturer, and that in his mind were he to do so, his position, to say the least, would be ambiguous. Years before, Adams (and another young man long since dead) had worked out for J. A. Lamb a glue formula. Mr. Lamb had lost interest and done nothing with it in his business. So there is a very real moral conflict involved. Mrs. Adams insists the formula belongs to her husband. He is not convinced of any such right, and furthermore, "an old-fashioned man," Virgil Adams has a loyalty amounting to love for his rich and powerful employer. The crisis of Tarkington's book is the breakdown of Adams' standards. Mrs. Adams precipitates it, but her instrument is Alice. The novel is not mistitled.

No one who has read *Alice Adams* ever forgets two huge scenes: the dance at the Palmers' and the dinner for Arthur Russell at the Adamses'. Tarkington's own phrase for that ghastly dinner in the steaming little house is "tragic-comic," and it applies as well to

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Alice's tortures as a wallflower at the Palmers'. In each, every grim or ludicrous detail builds mercilessly the atmosphere of hectic pretension with, at the same time, its overtones of moving pathos. The scenes ache with taut emotions. From the moment Alice gathers violets in the rain for her corsage until, home after the dance, she collapses in sobs in her mother's arms, an empathy of foolish suffering is forced upon the reader. Alice in her out-of-date organdy and her wilting violets, arriving with her vulgar brother Walter (her unwilling escort) in a rickety flivver Walter has borrowed, then painfully passing the hours with one desperate device after another in the attempt to conceal that she is mostly ignored—all this is made at once fascinating and almost unbearable by the brilliance of the writing. And the humid dinner amidst the dying roses is no less a triumph of execution as step by step poor Alice's airily erected implications of grandeur go down before Russell's eyes to the mean reality.

Both these great scenes, set pieces though they seem to be, knit into the main narrative. Alice's sobs after the dance bring her father to full wakefulness and are the key to what will break his code: his love for his daughter. The dinner ends in the havoc of revelation that son Walter has embezzled money from the Lamb Company and absconded. Mrs. Adams' screams resound upstairs as Alice on the front steps says goodbye to Russell. It is indeed the evening of the Adamses' total collapse. Next day the hard business hand of old Mr. Lamb throttles Virgil Adams' little glue factory, Adams is laid low with a second stroke that finishes his working days, and then the plain solutions of life for Alice and her family are at last faced.

On one occasion Alice says to her brother, indifferently, "You really *are* vulgar." Walter represents a typical degeneration. He is in rebellion, but he is a weakling. Virgil Adams looks up to the rich, his wife envies them, Alice tries to be like them. Walter, though it may be envy, hates them. He shoots crap with their servants. Alice, out strolling with Arthur Russell, encounters Walter with a whore. His activities in general are mysterious to his family. We are told just enough about him to believe that embezzlement is exactly what Walter would fall into. Mrs. Adams' conviction, of course, is that Walter "is a *good* boy." She perceives that "if any-

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thing's gone wrong it's my fault"; but her reasoning is sentimental as always. She does not see Walter as the combination of weakness and determination inherited from herself. To her, Walter's troubling character results from his lack of advantages, and this she blames on herself because she had not sooner somehow driven her husband to riches.

Mrs. Adams is a corrupt woman, and yet not simply so. She nags, hounds, sighs, weeps, screams her single obsession. Nevertheless, her complexity is that she does all this unselfishly, and she truly does. She wants money and position for the sake of her children. In some ways she is a small-town Lady Macbeth. More pertinently, however, Mrs. Adams personifies the reckless passion of her times to Get Ahead. The morality is all materialistic. Walter carries this to criminality. Alice sustains herself with a dream world as long as she can. But Virgil Adams, at once decent and unambitious, breaks not under the incessant goading of his wife but when he asks Alice if her life "is hard to bear" and Alice, though she tries to say "No, papa," begins to cry. After that he is a desperate man, unsure of his rectitude, frantic in his moves. The smell of his little glue factory, he thinks, clings to him.

Tarkington's hand is utterly certain in creating Alice. She has elements he could do with a turn of the wrist as in the novel called *The Flirt* or exaggerate to caricature as with Lola Pratt in *Seventeen*. But Alice Adams, for all her posturings and flirtations, is seen with such understanding that she is an infinitely more mature creation than any of her sisters in his fiction. Alice "had been a belle too soon." It is—almost—as simple as that. In their teens these middle-class youngsters from such varying fortunes were, seemingly, more or less alike; boys and girls flocked back and forth among each other. But then the growing up, the differences in schooling, the emergence among the favored of those "advantages" Mrs. Adams harps on, altered Alice's world. Her pathos is her make-believe that she and her family "belong" to the Lamb and Palmer set. She daydreams this. She talks and acts it, with Arthur Russell as her foil, in ways cleverly catty or, sometimes, all but self-deceptive. She is still very young. Beneath her airiness we know she is a sweet and good girl because of her attitude toward her father; she can never

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really take up arms against him with her mother. Her collaboration with her mother is a helpless one. And when we first see her, she makes a gesture of significance: she throws away calling cards on which, sometime before, she had had her first name spelled "Alys." She then goes to walk, outrageously carrying a malacca stick, and of course the gesture with the cards is a tiny one; it is, though, the inkling that Alice has it in her to move toward reality. Her part in Tarkington's conclusion is prepared for.

But—before that—what of the loftier people toward whom in their various ways the Adamses look up? Underlying *Alice Adams* is a philosophy so mundane that Tarkington feels no need to call attention to it: that is, that some people have the ability to make money and a great many people have not. He does not ask if the larger class should have *more* money for services rendered. No more in *Alice Adams* than elsewhere in his work does it occur to him to question the status quo of free capitalism. There is a bland innocence here which is a part of his automatic limitation of view. Nevertheless, I think we cannot question the truth of his portraiture or of the situation *as it is*. And before leaping fiercely on the limitation we might, for instance, imagine what a proletarian novelist of the following decade would have done with the same theme.

Anyone who has read of the great personalities in the heyday of unimpeded capitalism will recognize J. A. Lamb as cut from the same cloth. He is old-school paternalism, a donor of turkeys and a payer of small wages. He is a gentleman full of sentimental kindness and hard as nails if anyone attempts to cross him. The combination is wholly realistic. And in the women of his class there is no active unkindliness; there is no understanding, and therefore no kindliness either. The protection is indifference. While Alice Adams likes to think of Mildred Palmer as her most intimate friend, Mildred has no interest whatsoever in Alice. In the Palmers' conversation, when Arthur Russell learns the real state of affairs about Virgil Adams and his glue formula, Alice is vaguely "a Miss Adams" and then, on Mrs. Palmer's clearer recollection, "a very pushing little person." Russell observes "the deadliness of the story: its lack of malice, even of resentment"—that is, its utter lack of importance beyond the mildly ridiculous. Mrs. Palmer, he thought, "sat there,

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large, kind, serene—a protest might astonish but could not change her." Old Mr. Lamb reveals a similar remoteness, so natural as to be unknown to himself and yet inconceivable to the Adamses, when he informs Alice after the debacle, "I never even hardly noticed your brother was still working for me. I never thought anything about it. . . . If the boy wanted to stay there, I didn't consider it my business to send him away on account of any feeling I had toward his father." Mr. Lamb is then in the midst of two typical actions: he has broken Adams' business venture and, incidentally, Adams himself, and he is about to pay Adams, so to speak, for the damages "about ninety-three hundred dollars as a total—or say ninety-three hundred and fifty." Alice thanks him.

Tarkington is going well everywhere in *Alice Adams*. There are no youngsters to captivate him. Another weakness of his, to bring on Negroes as comedy relief, appears very little in *Alice* and only once offensively. Here his realism probes no more into sexual matters or anything else impolite than in his other novels; but here it is consistent on its own terms without contrivance of plot or falsifyings of situation. It has so much revelation that we need nothing further. We are convinced that we "know all about" these people.

There are those in the past who have praised *Alice Adams* and deplored its "sentimental" ending. This is a misreading based, I think, upon other Tarkington novels. In no conventional sense does *Alice* have a happy ending. Walter has fled in disgrace. Mrs. Adams, querulous as ever, is rearranging the house to take in boarders and roomers. Adams himself is helpless, and to Alice he defies his status as "a landlady's husband." But Alice feels pretty sure that her father will be just that, and she goes downtown to begin a working-girl's life by entering Frincke's Business College. On that forlorn, determined walk she briefly encounters Arthur Russell whom she has not seen since the fiasco of the Adamses' dinner; but there is in her no hope of his entering her world again—"a faithless lover . . . protesting that he'd like to call some time—if he could!"

From far back in the narrative, and on more than one occasion, we have known Alice's special feeling about the Business College. "She hated the place, and yet she seldom hurried by it or averted her eyes. It had an unpleasant fascination for her, and a mysteri-

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ous reproach, which she did not seek to fathom." Now (300 pages later) she enters and goes up the stairs. "Half-way up the shadows were heaviest, but after that the place began to seem brighter. There was an open window overhead somewhere, she found, and the steps at the top were gay with sunshine." All of Alice's pretentious dreams have perished and her possible marriage to the well-connected, well-to-do Russell has perished with them, and her family is worse off than ever before. That mitigating sunlight on the stairs is only the warrant of the rightness of her common sense, integrity, bravery; she has come down in the world and has discovered her real world. In her active acceptance is her maturity. In Tarkington's way it is gently put, but no other reading is plausible in that best ending of his best novel.

There is some biographical detail, for which I am indebted to James Woodress' book, that illuminates Tarkington's social position, and thereby the kind of man we apprehend behind his novels. The Tarkingtons were good stock, but there was an imbalance both in the family and financial security. His father, John Tarkington, appears to have been an admirable man, kindly, intelligent. But the mother, Elizabeth Booth, was the firmer and probably the driving hand; among other things she was an interfering, overprotective mother. Further, it was her brother, Newton Booth, who was the "distinguished" relative, governor of California and United States senator. It was a legacy from this uncle, for whom the novelist was named, which supported young Tarkington during his apprentice years. Senator Booth's gift built the big house on North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, to which the Tarkingtons moved when Booth was a boy. There they lived for decades—the novelist himself until the early 1920's, by which time it stood in a neighborhood sinking under shops and gas stations. And Tarkington and his wife moved to a "new development" farther out.

John Tarkington was a lawyer, briefly a judge. However, at the time his son was thirty and he himself sixty-seven, he was in the employ of an Indianapolis bank. And the son, writing from New York* about the forthcoming announcement of his first novel, exclaimed, "Judge Tarkington of Indianapolis will see his name pre-

* See the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Winter, 1955.

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sented to some 350,000 readers. Query: What would S.J.F. have given if the ad. could have followed, 'Director Fletcher Nat. Bank and Manager S(afe) Dep(osit). Boxes $5.00 to $40.00—long time granted on lots of 200 feet.' " "S.J.F." meant Judge Tarkington's rich, powerful boss, Stoughton J. Fletcher. And Booth Tarkington's tone seems unmistakable; it is as though Mrs. Adams had finally reached a moment of elation: "Old J. A. Lamb may be pretty impressed at last." Three years later, Fletcher's daughter Louisa became Mrs. Booth Tarkington. Not quite ten years after that the marriage ended in divorce. In 1912 Tarkington quit his drinking, which had been excessive. In November of that year he married Susannah Robinson. Following the World War, Woodress tells us in the biography, Tarkington's ex-brother-in-law Fletcher lost his fortune and his grand house: one of the city's Ambersonian families had crashed. But Tarkington, good old stock as he may have been in Indianapolis, was by then something no Tarkington had been—a wealthy man.

In the Midwest-city trilogy of novels, his focus was upon the Sheridans, the Ambersons, and the Oliphants, and these families are of a social caste similar to that of the Lambs and the Palmers in *Alice Adams*. But in *Alice* it is the Adamses who are at front stage, Virgil Adams and his modest job and his unforgettably thin-walled house with its front porch and bad pictures and worn furniture. Tarkington could not exclude gallantry in portraying Alice nor some sort of understanding pity toward her and her family. But who can doubt that Tarkington despised the threadbare, pinch-penny, insecure life represented by the Adamses; or that from his superiority to it—in part a self-achieved superiority—he was able to write *Alice Adams*?

Speculation is unnecessary: Robert Cortes Holliday reported a conversation with Tarkington in the year *Alice Adams* was being written. Tarkington declared he "hated" the book and didn't think anybody would read it. Holliday reminded him that he had said the same thing while writing *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Tarkington said: "I know, but this is much worse. The people are such a rotten, insignificant lot, and nothing ever happens except a continual piling up of petty detail. Nobody will want it."

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With its class of everyday, semi-anonymous folk he was uninvolved. For himself, he knew what their place was, wrote a drama of their struggle to better it, and concluded by putting them firmly in their place. For once in his career he was guaranteed a clinical detachment. Here he felt no need for apologetics. His focus, so generally softened by fondness for the "better people," in *Alice Adams* flicked on sharply to dissect the "little people." Fortunately, Tarkington also had the gifts of humor and compassion. The Adamses are seen in the round as only an artist could have seen them and made them live with significance. By an accident of economics in real life, the Adamses represent a special American era of ambition and disaster. They are the creation of a novelist whose characteristic commercial success and literary failure arise from his conformity to the very world against which the young expatriates of Paris and Greenwich Village were rebelling. The ironic triumph in the writing of *Alice Adams* is that of conformity with a difference. The Adamses' meaning and their pathos are not limited to a calendar date; but no other novelist made quite the same contribution to the record of the 1920's.

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POEMS

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

Interior Day

Coming from world's own weather through the door
We sense a presence known to us before
And stop, ensorcelled: "There it is," we say—
The mystery of intermural day
Which holds expandingly alert and still
The mutual version of one radiant will:
Time visible as light in luminous fusion,
Daytime and *daylight* in a closed equation,
A shining indivisible, to fill
The room, the universe, the soul, until
The brimming quiet glows in single rapture,
Time and the light forevermore one creature.

Bright Gravity

Yours was a cycle quicklier run,
A closer dance around the sun
On gallant golden orbit spun,
And all who loved you, all but one,
Moved to that briefer measure too,
Bound as they were by sun in you.

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Death Wish

If now but to die could be feathered and small,
Unnoticed and softly to flutter and fall,
The wing slipping down by the wall.

To suffer the pang and comply without word,
To live as a woman but die as a bird,
The wound, and the wounding, inferred.

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America Seen From France

JOSEPH E. BAKER

EVERY AMERICAN who makes decisions on policy, who writes, teaches, advises or entertains, should be granted the opportunity at least once every twenty years to revolutionize his own interpretation of our American world by stepping outside of it for a year to look at it through European eyes. My own recent experience was in teaching American literature and civilization as a Fulbright lecturer in various parts of France. It was my duty and pleasure to attain some understanding of the foreign country in which I worked and lived. But even more valuable was the chance to look back at America from unexpected angles. In such a situation one meets people who admire aspects of our civilization which we may not have properly evaluated—people who ignore, or are totally unaware of, things we take for granted. What was assumed to be low is exalted, and what was high is made low; we see our own national values in a fresh light.

Take the matter of gadgets. The French see us as a people always interested in buying, inventing and selling gadgets. When they say, "America is a land of gadgets," we consider it a devastating condemnation. But more often than not they are saying it with admiration and delight. It is not bitter envy, such as the French proletarian may feel toward the French bourgeois. It is an amused and enthusiastic regard—as if to say, "If we had the money and raw materials we would like to go in for gadgets, too." And the proof of this is the ingenuity of the French themselves in devising gadgets strikingly useful and clever. *Arts-Spectacles* of Paris recently carried a leading article which expressed pride in French

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mechanical inventions in a way wholly alien to an American journal of literary and aesthetic criticism.

There is no generalization more misleading than the claim, so often made, that Europeans scorn Americans as materialists. Among the French there is an esteem for American achievement that I found refreshing; they think of this country as the home of many original and valuable artistic contributions. For example, one of the top art periodicals praises Frank Sinatra for his perfection as a serious artist, rating his recordings far above those of French rivals. In October, 1955, *Arts-Spectacles* published an article on the renaissance of the cinema in America; and in another issue we read that our Westerns constitute a genre "singularly virile . . . at the base of the Western is found the sentiment of honor, respect for one's given word, and in general an apology for man. The Westerns reconcile us with humanity and merit more than our amused indulgence." An accumulation of such praise adds up to a picture of the United States as a major source of culture for Paris and the whole Continent.

Sometimes, indeed, I have felt that the admiration was too generous; for example, in popular periodicals, the praise lavished on juvenile Hollywood films with medieval settings. And the movie *Rear Window* hardly deserved to be treated as a masterpiece of psychology and of artistic technique. On the other hand, there is something salutary in coming into contact with a lively and sensitive culture that does not automatically dismiss Hollywood's products wholesale in the manner too widespread in America. I do not mean that the French are uncritical, but quite the opposite: their criticism is genuinely selective, and condemns individual faults rather than a whole art.

America seen from France is a pleasant country, highly civilized and creative. The French feeling rests on a deep friendliness which has not been destroyed in spite of the persistent Communist propaganda, the large number of arrogant American tourists who complain like spoiled children, and GI's who do not often speak respectfully of any culture, even their own.

We think of France as pre-eminently the land of general cul-

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ture and are surprised to find how many features of our own liberal education are admired by well-informed French professors. They criticize their university system for being *too vocational*, too specialized. In my own Midwestern state university, a candidate for a master of arts or doctoral degree in English is expected to be able to talk intelligently about philosophy, history, politics and various literatures, not just one. This is not obligatory in France. France has nothing corresponding to our best liberal arts colleges, both within and outside a university framework—and nothing corresponding to the extension onto the graduate level of advanced liberal education.

In American universities the faculty and students are, to our mutual advantage, brought much closer together than in France, where even graduate students rise when the professor enters the room. Some of the Continentals look with envy on the American's informality and would like to break down their own ancient social barriers. But what can a few individuals do against a dominant etiquette? Their professors find it harder than we do when they wish to try out new methods in the teaching or organization of courses. France has had a centralized educational system since Napoleon's time, and the French lack our hearty Anglo-Saxon faith in experiment; they are rationalists. Anything must be proved logically before it is tried; and when it is adopted at all it must be ready for use throughout the entire country at once. This emphasis on logic makes for conservatism in practice, sharp criticism in discussion (with hours spent in cafés), and occasional revolution.

Seeing America through foreign eyes accentuates the positive, often in surprising places. Having heard the bitter phrase, "coca-cola-colonialism," I was surprised to see how popular among French young people are such "American" drinks as coca-cola and milk. Not that resistance has disappeared! Traditionalists *take it for granted* that wine is the drink for human beings. "When calves drink wine, I will drink milk," said one sign on a float in a student parade during Mendès-France's drive against alcoholism. Denis de Rougemont, in *Vivre en Amérique*, generally so sympathetic, says, "In the masses as in the unconscious of almost every American, there is perhaps a latent gangster; witness their taste for sweets, for

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ice cream, for milk. . . ." These exceptions to pro-Americanism show how exciting it can seem to daring French youth to abstain from alcohol, or to drink what to us might seem mild!

We forget that sometimes Parisians look upon America as Americans look upon Paris; for example, as a source of styles (for French men), of dramatic entertainment (movies, far more popular among Parisians than their own theatrical productions), of dancing (such as the Charleston and *le jitterbug*), of music (*le jazz hot*). American orchestra leaders headline the news like visiting statesmen and movie stars. These are some of the arts of our invention which young people in France have snapped up, mastered and developed.

The implications of all this are more important than might be thought. It means that the French can think of America as a land where people know how to live and enjoy themselves, a land of vivacity and gaiety. They are not very conscious of the survival of puritanism in America, partly because many of them simply cannot understand such an attitude. How could anyone believe that human nature is depraved, that there is no salvation in reason? In this humanistic atmosphere I began to question my own analysis which had seen puritanism as so large a factor in the formation of modern America, and I put more emphasis on other aspects of our heritage from the seventeenth century and the older Merry England. Our square dances, for example, illustrate an aspect of American life which the French find congenial. In Auvergne, my students made tape recordings of all the square-dance records I had brought with me and all those a French professor of chemistry had brought back from Colorado—a total of thirty traditional American tunes. These, our *danses folkloriques Américaines*, are not rivaled in all of Europe for their combination of beauty and gaiety. The French can value such things that come down to us from our past, even when some unhappy Americans have themselves abandoned them. Other examples are New Orleans jazz and the dance hits of the 1920's, which in France are often played in their original form rather than with a modernized tempo.

In France nothing is ever quite allowed to die. An arena in Paris, built by the Romans, is still in use, for example, in the per-

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formance of folk dances which preserve their own medieval vigor and grace. In Brittany and certain other regions of France, it would not be difficult to retreat to a milieu 90 per cent medieval. There are still royalists who enliven walls with scribbles such as *Vive le Roi*, and who support a weekly press that blames England and America for the existence of republics in various parts of the world, including France, and for advocating self-government and rule by elected representatives. One front-page editorial in August of 1955 was headlined, "It is not a question of the throne of Morocco, but of the throne of France." Without a king, how can France face the problems of the twentieth century? The pretender to the throne, by the way, is an active politician.

And in France something else survives that is almost as old-fashioned as the Charleston: I refer to a lively intellectual sympathy with the Communist regime. I don't know anything that struck me as so unrealistic as these fellow travelers. Simone de Beauvoir, in *Les Temps Modernes*, edited by Sartre, officially defines the Occident as those peoples who recognize "the suzerainty of the U.S.A.," while adding that "in the Occident, all men who are not bourgeois reject the civilization of the Occidental bourgeoisie." "The Americans," she writes, "have the atomic bomb; and . . . for them the bomb fills the place of thought." The myths perpetuated by these left-wing litterateurs have undergone a devastating analysis in Raymond Aron's *L'Opium des Intellectuels* (1955). The opium which sends intellectuals off into a dream world is, of course, Marxism. He cites as "a typical example of the substitution of dogmas for facts, a substitution characteristic of Stalinist scholastic," specifically the pretense that the Marshall Plan caused unemployment and low salaries. He wisely points out that America has come nearer than any other country to achieving what is hoped for by the majority of Europeans, including the intellectuals, and that the values advocated by the United States are hard to distinguish from those proclaimed by our severest critics. The Left might see this if they were not blinded by the opiate of Marxist myths.

My generalization as to the intelligent friendliness of the French in their treatment of America here runs into its great exception.

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Since this exception involves authors, and since our own chief contact with European thought is through literature, we tend to overestimate the significance of these writers in the total climate of French opinion. Authors have prestige in France, but they do not have enough political power even to obtain a just inheritance law governing the disposal of their own literary property. And furthermore, they neither aim to nor do express France.

French Communists have convinced themselves and many of their opponents that they would feel justified in bringing in a Russian army to establish a dictatorship the moment that American military support is withdrawn. They do not recognize the right of a people to select its own policies. They hate America for helping France to stay French. Seeing both of our nations unjustly attacked naturally increased my respect for a political tradition we have in common. From the point of view of French liberal individualism, America has been honored in her enemies, especially those against whom we have waged war, hot or cold. Even in France, communism resembles fascism, sometimes with a German tinge, for example, as it sets out systematically to create hero worship. The foremost Communist daily, *L'Humanité* of Paris, on one Monday morning presented as the weekend's chief news—covering most of the front page, all of the back page, and many columns in between —the fact that the newspaper itself had held a rally the day before. Its reporters gushed, without restraint, in describing this as *sans précédent*. But more sinister than the absence of critical taste and realism is the glorification of the Hero. This rally was held in the presence of their leader, Thorez; the headline that monopolized the whole upper portion of the front page began, *En présence de Maurice Thorez. . . .* Page four had a two-column headline, *Vive le Comité Central!* which suggests a foretaste of what Parisian intellectual life would be like under communism. The reactionary political forces in America are not half so "fascist," in spite of all the name-calling to which they are subjected. An American who has no desire to dominate the world can be awakened by such stuff to a recognition of how comparatively reasonable and tolerant his countrymen really are.

Looking at France in 1955, one saw the features of America in

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1930, with certain lines exaggerated—for our ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed had not been experiencing their deep resentment for two or three generations. The situation has long been desperate in a country efficiently invaded by the Germans three times in less than a century, a country woefully lacking in the raw materials of modern industry. Yet France is proud to be the nation that first led the world in technology and "progress"—progress as Americans now understand it. And it is prouder still, justifiably proud, of being the great living representative in the Atlantic world of the ancient Mediterranean civilization whose tradition, as the French see it, has been unbroken since Homer. The living medievalism of England seems by comparison a younger growth; and the impressive eighteenth-century configuration of American civilization is for Paris only *one* of the ways of being classical. An editorial in a popular French newspaper commented that it would be a sad day for France when the American army should be withdrawn, leaving France alone on the Continent. We can return the compliment and recognize that it would be a sad day for American culture if the intellectual and artistic life of France should become enfeebled.

But it was by living in France that I came to realize the force of the definition of proletarians as "those excluded from a culture." France offers more delights to man—and to woman—than any other country, past or present; but for approximately 40 per cent of her population, most of these delights are not available. With prices as high as those in the United States, French labor earns about one-third the American wage. As one workingman, escaping to Chicago, said to me, "The bourgeoisie is polite and clean, and life in France can be very pleasant for the rich; for us, it is miserable." A "rich" man in such a context can be roughly defined as a man who owns a car. Half the young men in America are "rich" or know that they could be so within a year. In France, even some of the successful bourgeois are hard pushed to make both ends meet, that is, to maintain for their families a high degree of civilization. Pay your workmen more and you can't send your son to the university; then what becomes of learning? Raise the wages of printers, and teachers can't buy books. If the bourgeois could not afford to buy the books and see the plays that attack the bourgeoi-

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sie, how would the literary Left make a living? This reminds one of the question: Who bought *Babbitt* and *Main Street*?

Yet even the middle-class conservatives accept the revolutionary ideals of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality. Each political party indicates by its name that it wishes to represent what is liberal, popular, democratic or even socialistic. During the year more than one French journalist traveling in America reported that he was especially struck by the marvelous *equality* in American society. "Psychologically," said one of these reporters, "there are no class barriers in America." France admires equality, and set it up as a national goal as far back as 1789, when it seemed an ideal too radical for many Americans. But their economy has not been able to put this ideal into practice. Here again from the transatlantic vantage point one can see the United States as the fulfillment of an old French aspiration. An American's realization of this truth is only intensified when he comes upon the myths elaborated by the Communist press about the terrible conditions of American labor, or a reference to the United States as a country "from which democracy has been banished." The effect of these obvious untruths, alongside the genuine French evaluation of American life, is to highlight certain real features of our civilization.

Seen from the perspective of France, American politics looks like a machine of great power and flexibility. The French system is both weak and rigid. It does not work; that is, it does not enable the French people to implement its own purposes. How tragically false to say that a people gets the government it deserves! Surely the Spanish and the Hungarians are not so wicked or stupid as to deserve their present punishment. The French political machine does not do justice to the French, who, for their individual intelligence, humanity and noble ideals, surely deserve the best. They want reforms; but how can they get them? I would invite any critic of France to tell how that problem can be solved, short of revolution; and wouldn't a revolution add devastation to other miseries? Mendès-France gave the nation hope by combining popularity, power and statesmanship after the fashion of the great American Presidents. Because of his very success he was forced out of office.

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He was so effective and popular that other politicians envied him. And the French system is constructed on the "art for art's sake" principle, as if politics were maintained for the sake of politicians, the army for the sake of military careers, colonies for the sake of colonials (not the natives), and business for the sake of businessmen. A politician may be made premier because his party *lost* the election. And Mendès-France's successor, Edgar Faure, was allowed to hold power, even though repudiated by his own party, because the vote *against* him was so heavy. Less decisively defeated, he would not have had the right, under the constitution, to continue in power. But so *heavily* defeated, Faure could retain office.

In the French assembly, to get a sufficient majority the government has to lean for some support on either the Right or the Left, that is, on men who are hostile to the existence of the self-governing Republic. It has been practically impossible to get a majority in the center. Four of the six leading parties find no equivalent in America: the Communists, the Right (DeGaullists, royalists, imperialists, et cetera), the Socialists, the Catholic party. Both American parties would lie in the center. By European standards, there is no great difference between the programs offered by our Democratic and Republican parties.

While France was undergoing a typically frustrating year in 1954, the United States made a greater electoral change with much less sacrifice of stability. Control of our Congress shifted from one party to another with no weakening of our executive or of our national policies. Our President was not forced out of office, as he would have been in France or even in England. Indeed, he himself shifted his leadership in the direction of the policies of the victorious Democrats, a phenomenon utterly impossible in France. And it is not merely politicians I have in mind when I say that in comparison with Continental extremists, a Republican administrator seems democratic and a New Deal intellectual quite a practical administrator.

If the French themselves are not always aware of all the things I have mentioned, it is because they have not seen America. According to a recent survey by the French Institute of Public Opinion, covering a cross section of all social classes, 70 per cent of those

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polled said they did not understand a word of English, and 82 per cent that they had never met an American. I have not been trying to summarize national opinion, but to set forth insights and interpretations that can come to one who knows America and looks at it from a French perspective. Over and beyond our prosperity and our military might—which are only too well publicized—we do have many advantages, from the most highly civilized point of view. But I do not wish to be a chauvinist. Of course, there are ways in which French life has advantages that the United States lacks, or is just beginning to acquire. To elaborate this point would merely stress what most of my readers already know about the French, such as their cuisine, their originality in art, their fine tradition of acting—generally, their cultivation of the enjoyment of leisure. But even in those realms where we ordinarily grant them supremacy, the French are ever eager to experience some new thing. Their numerous theaters welcome and respect American plays and musicals. They would like to explore *our* regional cuisines. Given enough money, they would travel all over the United States, more than Americans travel in most parts of France. If this happened more frequently, it would increase our ability to know ourselves, with the aid of their friendly observation and fresh intelligence.

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The Homecoming

PATRICIA HOOPER

Marked by the obeying wind which laughed at him
and the wind-whipped, anchored trees my love came
singing to find me under the torn star
and smiled at me, filling my world up
hour by hour as if he were not dead.

And I watched for him under the bent trees, waiting,
wanting the shirt that he wore; the burnt sandals
as if he had walked over flame struck me as being
evidence of his coming, and I took them
out to the boathouse and buried them under the floor.

I thought that I saw the trees part by the water
as if the world had been watching, and my love
went out into the lake as if he did not know me,
making me wonder whether or not it was true.
Being young, I went to the boathouse and I wept.

✪ PATRICIA HOOPER, who is fifteen years old and a student in the public schools of Saginaw, Michigan, is making her first appearance in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR with this poem. Two of her poems are to be included in a forthcoming anthology to be published by New Directions.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Time is money.

I hope that I am wrong in my vague guess that Ben Franklin gave currency to this monstrous assertion. If he did, then I hope that he was not wholly responsible and that it was originally a folk saying—one of those cases in which a proverb represents the folly of many and the vulgarity of one.

In actual fact the opposite is truer: Money is time. Time is at least the best of all the things that money can buy, and the wise man values it for nothing else. But time isn't money; it doesn't even resemble money. It can't be accumulated, and it can't be inherited. It can't be borrowed or loaned. It can't even be saved, though it can be wisely spent.

Just so much time is given to every man, and there is nothing he can do to increase the amount, not even by turning it into money. Like Balzac's wild ass's skin, it shrinks ineluctably day and night. The sands, as a wiser folk saying has it, run out. And alas for him who exchanges more of it than he must for money. That process is, as the scientists say, irreversible. At the end of every rich man's life (and at the end of many a poor man's, too) is the realization not that time is money, but that, as a modern saying has it, you can't take it with you. For once, what sounds like the more flippant comment is actually the sounder.

Even the wisest spender—i.e., the one who buys time—doesn't need a great deal to buy as much as money can obtain. There are no more than twenty-four hours to a day nor much more than three score years and ten to a life at any price. As a matter of fact, beyond a certain amount, money begins to cost time instead of buying it. Either, to use Thoreau's phrase, you "sell your life for money" or, even if you just "have" it instead of working for it, you spend your time managing it. And if you don't even have to manage it, if it just rolls in from some annuity or some investment trust, then you have to manage the things you buy with it: big houses, many servants, and all the other impedimenta that people with money seem unable to resist burdening themselves with. Having too much money is the next worst thing to having too little and can be almost as great a thief of time. Sour grapes? Not entirely, I think.

Reversing the usual attitude, I sometimes find myself less inclined to discount the rich who have inherited their money than those who have worked for it, because at least they have not wasted their lives in "making" it. And though, like most people who belong to no union, I think union demands are sometimes unreasonable, I doubt that "time and a half for overtime" is actually enough. A man deserves very high pay indeed when he is compelled to sell any of the remaining margin around his life even when, as in the case of some union workers, the margin is wider than most others enjoy. The president of a large corporation is said to have remarked, "When I pay an executive a hundred thousand per annum I expect him to work himself to death in ten years." Yet he obviously did not doubt that he would get plenty of takers. College professors are, of course, expected to do outside jobs for little or nothing because they do it on "spare time." They haven't learned, as the worker has, to call it "overtime" instead.

Readers afflicted with long memories for unimportant things may recall that two years ago I began my first contribution to this department with a reference to the vaudeville theaters of my youth and to the institution known as "the hook," whose chief physical instrument was the terrifying

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crosier used on amateur night to drag ignominiously off stage those aspirants who overstayed their welcome. Lest I raise any false hopes, let me say at once that I have not yet got the hook. But I have been thinking of something else in connection with vaudeville. Have I, I wonder, taken sufficient advantage in the conduct of this department of a characteristic of vaudeville sometimes said to have been responsible for the success it once enjoyed? Have I, I mean, changed the subject often enough? A great part of vaudeville was tolerated not so much because any of the turns was very entertaining as because the spectator knew none would last very long and was free to hope the next would be better. Here was, in other words, another example of the triumph of hope over experience. And if it took several generations for spectators to realize that this hope was unfounded, then why should I not prolong my own employment by sometimes offering a variety show rather than one continuous discourse? I shall try the experiment this quarter. Please, then, do not look for any hidden continuity. There will be none; no more, in fact, than there was in vaudeville between the trained seals who opened and the sister act which followed. And if in this case also none of the turns is good, at least each will soon be over.

Reading the other day a certain Victorian book by a moralizing author, I was suddenly struck by a difference between the Victorian point of view and ours which just possibly may be quite as important as the much discussed change in sex morality. This writer was fearfully concerned with the "spoiled child," and it occurred to me that not only the Victorian but all ages from the first Christian down to the beginning of our own were constantly expressing the fear that not only children but young ladies, the laboring classes, the middle classes, and in fact nearly everybody except the writer himself was being "spoiled." Today we have recovered from that obsession, but we seem to have fallen victim to another. Although we are no longer afraid that children or anybody else may be "spoiled," we have become just as fearful that they may be "underprivileged."

In both cases the remote consequences of the ever-present threat are assumed to be even worse than the immediate ones. The spoiled child would end on the gallows; the underprivileged one is now headed for a whole gallery of neuroses and almost sure to turn out "antisocial." Our concern is certainly the more amiable, but I am not sure that it is any less extravagant. People survived a lot of abuse in former times, and not getting everything you want is not always as fatal to normality as we assume today. The old-fashioned parent who believed in the necessity of "breaking the child's will" was certainly wrong, but so perhaps is the modern who supposes that he is heading his offspring for the psychoanalyst's couch if he forbids him to saw the leg off the dining-room table. Yet if you argue the question, the general opinion seems to be that there is no course in between; and if you agree that "breaking the will" is bad, then you are supposed to have to admit that the "permissive system" must be right.

An article I once wrote at the request of the general editor of one of the popular "home magazines" was vetoed by the editor of its mother-and-child department because I said that although parents should know the great truth that "children should be loved," it was more important for the children themselves to realize its corollary: "Children should be lovable." Thriftily I managed to use this notion elsewhere, but the mother-and-child editor said it would lead readers to conclude that the magazine was advising parents to beat their babies. The golden mean may seem to represent an easy sort of compromise. I remember that the first time it was expounded to me I was not at all impressed. But Aristotle must have made so much of it because he realized that there is nothing to which the human being takes less readily.

From experience I have learned that you can't criticize anything without having it supposed that you favor some opposite ex-

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treme. If you say, for example, that automobiles should not be built to run ninety miles an hour, you are asked scornfully if you want to go back to the horse and buggy, as though nothing between ninety miles an hour and eight were possible—as, indeed, seems to be the case where human beings are involved. This line of argument used to be used chiefly against "liberals" and "progressives" when they were in the minority. If one of them opposed the twelve-hour day it was assumed that he was advocating a life of almost uninterrupted leisure for labor. Nowadays it is more often used, as the woman editor used it, against every middle-of-the-road proposal. If you confess the suspicion that a certain specific demand of some single union is unreasonable, then you are accused of wanting to hand the manacled workingman over to exploiters, just as you have already been accused of maintaining that the automobile should be abolished and children beaten daily. This is no doubt the reason why it sometimes seems that progress is a delusion, that change is never anything except a switch from one excess to another, and that we never get rid of an evil except by exchanging it for its opposite.

The first Samuel Butler describes the temperament of a contemporary by calling him the sort of man who would go on "Crying 'Fire! Fire!' in the middle of Noah's flood." This seems to me so nearly universal a human tendency that I think it ought to be more fully recognized and given an accepted designation. I can never remember which of Bacon's fantastically named idols is which, or why he called it what he did, but I propose a fifth more simply identified. Why shouldn't it be called "The Idol of the Firehouse"? It gets in the way of rational thinking as frequently as any of the others.

You might suppose that the subjects of inquiry in which speculative opinion plays a large part would be those in which middle-of-the-road positions would be the most likely to prevail. Actually (as in the case of literary theory and judgment) they are those most confused by the Idol of the Firehouse. Either literature is essentially moralizing (Tolstoy) or literature has nothing at all to do with morality (the aesthetes and some of the New Critics). It is a literal image of reality, or it has nothing to do with reality. It is all imitation; it is all expression. It is a revelation of personality or it is (as in Eliot) essentially impersonal. Poetry deals with "dreams"; poetry is the opposite of dreaming.

Criticism was once primarily the passing of a judgment, then it became exclusively a matter of "exposition"; and now it is back to judgment again. Sometimes it has been a matter of "impressions"; sometimes it is called an exact objective science. It is nothing but the adventures of the soul among the masterpieces, or the critic's soul has nothing to do with it, et cetera, et cetera. Yet although Dryden and Johnson were "judicial critics," their best remembered and most often quoted remarks are as impressionistic as "Here is God's plenty," "He was the man of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, who had the largest and most comprehensive soul," and "He found it brick, and he left it marble." Obviously they answered the questions whether criticism is a science or an art and whether it should deal with impressions or analytical judgments by saying "both." Yet in every age since, men less wise have cried "Fire!" whenever we were having a flood and "Flood!" whenever we were having a fire.

I would like to write "good English," although I don't always succeed. Moreover, my taste is on the whole conservative. But I still don't know how to locate the line between pedantry and illiteracy. Obviously neither the old-fashioned schoolmarm's insistence that what is right is right and what is wrong is wrong will do; but neither will the new-fashioned educator's willingness to settle for what he calls "acceptable English"—which includes all the solecisms, slang phrases and merely ignorant locutions any sizable group cares to indulge in.

For all these reasons, I seized eagerly upon an advance copy of the Oxford University

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Press's admirable *Dictionary of American-English Usage* by Margaret Nicholson, based on Fowler's *Modern English Usage*. Here is how it tried to solve the general problem in connection with the specific problem of Gallicisms: "What the wise man does is to recognize that the conversational usage of educated people in general, not his predilections or a literary fashion of the moment, is the naturalizing authority, and therefore to adopt a Gallicism only when he is of the opinion that it is a Gallicism no more."

This sounds fine. It is a version of the "be not the first by whom the new is tried" injunction, and since it is a middle-of-the-road position I ought to be all for it—as indeed I am. But there is a catch. If only the usage of educated people can make a Gallicism English (or a colloquial phrase no longer colloquial) and if educated people never use Gallicisms or colloquial phrases until they have ceased to be either, then obviously no Gallicism or colloquialism will ever be legitimized. *Some* educated people must refuse to do "what the wise man does." Should we look down our noses at these mavericks or should we honor them for the nonconformity which will enable us more cautious souls to follow after them with conscious virtue in a few years?

In vaudeville it was a fixed tradition that "next to closing" was the place of honor on any bill, and stars always insisted upon it. The very last act was, on the other hand, always undistinguished and usually something like acrobats that one could walk out on in the confident knowledge that nothing unfamilar would be missed. In fact, acts habitually assigned to close were sometimes contemptuously referred to as "chasers" (in the simple rather than in the now more familar bar-service sense), and at continuous-performance houses they were often deliberately designed to be so stupefyingly boresome that no one who had seen the whole show would be tempted to sit through the chaser for the sake of beginning all over again.

Most literary works, no matter what their form, follow a different plan: they aim both to open strong and to close strong. I seem to remember that some magazine once invited its readers to cite what they believed to be the finest of all opening sentences for a novel—the beginnings of *Pride and Prejudice*, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife"; *Anna Karenina*, "Every happy family is alike, every unhappy family unhappy in its own way"; and *Moby Dick*, "Call me Ishmael," were high favorites. As for me, I put in a word for Ilf and Petrov's satiric *Little Golden Calf*, which begins, "Pedestrians should be loved," and goes on to illustrate the fine proletarian thesis that nearly all the great inventors, statesmen and poets of the past were pedestrians.

Essays present a different problem, but in my opinion no other beginning could possibly be so good as Max Beerbohm's sentence: "Much as it will surprise my readers to hear this, I was not unpopular at school." Ending an essay is still another problem, and I am afraid I cannot do better than to borrow Mr. Bennett's remark to his daughter who was too obliging at the harpsichord: "You have entertained us enough for one evening."

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CONtroversy

In the belief that all sides of a question should be heard and that such a hearing makes good reading, we take pleasure in introducing a new department—Controversy—*which will appear from time to time. In the present issue, the discussions and comments have their origins in various pieces we printed in the Autumn and Winter numbers, including Geoffrey Wagner's article, "The Decline of Book Reviewing"; Saunders Redding's article, "The Meaning of Bandung"; and Robert Langbaum's review of* In Search of Heresy *by John W. Aldridge.*

—EDITOR

I find myself generally confused about the article in the Winter issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR by Geoffrey Wagner. I am afraid that I do not understand the central point of view, unless it is that of a critic who seems not to understand the central currents of criticism today. In brief, I think it is entertaining nonsense. That is to say, I agree with several of Mr. Wagner's points (if they were not so smart-alecky they would carry more weight), but I have no conviction that he is either well informed or serious about his own thesis.

In the first place, how can he select Stanley Edgar Hyman "as fairly representing the professional critic." Mr. Hyman does not represent me, for example, nor, say, Edmund Wilson nor Malcolm Cowley nor a host of others like Alfred Kazin—all professional critics. Mr. Hyman represents only Mr. Hyman, as I pointed out in a piece on the New Criticism in the Fall Books issue of the *Nation*.

Mr. Wagner's second main authority seems to be Percy Lubbock whose "invaluable," as he calls it, *Craft of Fiction* represents mainly and merely the Jamesian view of the craft of fiction—which is why the later Henry James failed as a novelist, and Mr. Lubbock as a critic.

Thirdly, and this frankly astounds me, Mr. Wagner then quotes his publisher friend that *Time* "is presently one of the most honest book-reviewing organs operating." And, adds Mr. Wagner blithely, "one knows where one is when reading *Time*." Yes, one does; and does Mr. Wagner really want to be there?

These are his three central sources, so far as I can understand his whimsical logic, for good criticism and good book-reviewing; and that is why I think his article collapses just when he had a chance to say something important about the trends in both criticism and reviewing today.

As for the *London Times*'s unsigned reviews, which Mr. Wagner uses rather to bludgeon the *New York Times Book Review*, my series of books on the American novel have had three front-page reviews in that distinguished British paper, and in none of these reviews have I felt that the reviewer knew what he was talking about. So much for the Empire.

Now on the personal side, since Mr. Wagner also uses me as a horrid example of the low state of book-reviewing today—a thesis I might agree with if it had been presented more intelligently—it seems odd to me that Mr. Wagner should quote my review of Wouk's last novel as "a friendly notice," when this review, on the front

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page of the *Times Book Review*, denied either the value of art or of life to *Marjorie Morningstar*. I do not consider that "friendly," in Mr. Wagner's terminology, but I do say it was an honest critical judgment.

And finally, my *Nation* article was not written on the novel at all, but on what *Time* and *Life* had made of the novel and of Mr. Wouk himself, and particularly the dreadful feature article in *Time* which showed exactly where that magazine stood in its espousal of the arts. But where, oh where, does Mr. Wagner stand?

MAXWELL GEISMAR

Prior to my advance look at "The Decline of Book Reviewing," I really couldn't imagine how it would feel to have my risibilities tickled. However, since Geoffrey Wagner identified himself as a "literary critic" to the Madison Avenue type he met on the train to Boston, I'm prepared to be instructed. What and Who is Geoffrey Wagner and Where do I read his literary criticism?

Can it be that there is a book medium *not* printed in somebody's basement with an audience special enough to clamor only for the fuzzy (and extremely confidential) lit'r'y mysticisms of Stanley Edgar Hyman and the strenuous Mr. Wagner?

Borrowing freely from the acerbities of Mr. Hyman, adding a dash of Wagnerian sound and fury, and throwing in some of the most misinformed innuendoes ever cleared by the editors of a responsible magazine, the author has really exposed himself in public. A rebuffed Zarathustra who has knocked upon quite a few closed doors (I learned) among the major book media he takes to task, Mr. Wagner decided to throw a rock through the window. Lucky he didn't hit anybody.

I don't mind being called a "cheerleader for fiction" or one of the "gee-whiz boys." All of us have been called worse from time to time, especially by authors (in longish letters) who communicate with a much different label in mind. Since the sweeping jeremiad at hand covers the book world with about the same degree of accuracy as a snowstorm (only the university elite are allowed to find shelter), the lonely person standing apart is Mr. Wagner. But I wonder if he ever considered the idea that the first responsibility of *either* a critic or a reviewer is to think clearly and to report accurately.

Whatever else the reviewer or critic may be (can't we just assume that one must be both if he's to stand the test of critical readership by editors, authors, publishers, colleagues and general public?) he *must* accept the professional tenets of journalism. Only the very occasional reviewer or a critic of the critics can, if he is facile enough with the language, get away with feeding his own Inner Man.

Not all categories of fiction can be measured by one critical yardstick, as Mr. Wagner supposes. The intent of the author enters into it—and how well he arrives on target. We don't compare eggs and eggplants. We shouldn't compare the best historical novel of the year with an earnest but not so successful slice of belles-lettres by the head of the English department.

After all, any reader of the *New York Times Book Review* or the *Saturday Review* is perfectly capable of exercising his own critical judgment in the matter of what review category interests him. Instead of "patronizing the general American audience as both illiterate and uncritical," one must respect the audience as the real boss of the scene. The book review is a total communication with each member of the audience, not an esoteric or whimsical exhibition by a reviewer with an urge to intrude himself. Contrary to Mr. Wagner's supposition, most readers do not have the benefit of a jacket blurb or a report from *Publishers' Weekly* as a fill-in for a reviewer who neglects the prosaic informational side of his business.

Turning back a Wagnerian quotation from Hazlitt, one can look a long way in this piece for "the qualities of intuitive insight or analytic penetration" that are al-

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leged to be components of an adequate book review.

And only a man with the professional proclivities of Dr. Edmund Bergler would be qualified to judge a final parenthesis from the remarkable document at hand: "I do not personally subscribe (as some I know do) to the theory that advertising appropriations influence review space allotted. I do not do so out of experience [*sic*]; the least advertised of my own four novels published in this country received the most reviewing." Not a bad gambit, this one of making an assertion through a disclaimer. Mr. Wagner manages it at least seven times in his article.

A new critical controversy would be a fine thing for everybody concerned, but it will take more than words to start it. There really are some good books published once in a while, books full of craftsmanship and carefully conceived. Would it be more intelligent and chic to take the dim view, no matter what?

As that mass communicator on the Boston train would probably say if anybody asked *him*: Let's run this one up the flagpole and see who salutes, Mr. Wagner.

JAMES KELLY

When Señor Licentiate Pero Perez entered the locked library of Don Quixote, the housekeeper wisely scampered for hyssop and holy water. Douse the books, she urged, lest some enchanter, of the many with which the books abounded, deter them from consigning the books to oblivion.

The burden of Geoffrey Wagner's complaint in the Winter issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, though I confess I have found it difficult to follow his argument in "The Decline of Book Reviewing," seems to be that book reviewers too often yield to the enchantment of books, and that they refuse to use the hyssop and holy water of their betters, the critics.

Mr. Wagner is a literary critic, by his own admission. The gap between critics and reviewers, he tells us, is extremely wide today. He quotes with apparent relish, if somewhat out of context, a comment from Stanley Edgar Hyman's *The Armed Vision* that "one of the most remarkable features of our time is the number of ostensible critics, like Henry Seidel Canby or the brothers Van Doren, who on examination turn out to be disguised reviewers."

As an undisguised book reviewer, frankly and happily a book reviewer, one because I have found an enjoyment in books to be found nowhere else, I should like to say a word in definition and defense of the occupation. My credentials are those of a contributor, through some years of concern with other matters, to the publications in which Mr. Wagner has found a decline—as a fairly steady contributor for ten years and more to the *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, an occasional contributor to the *New York Times Book Review* (and to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR), to other newspapers and monthlies and quarterlies.

Surely no one is likely to choose to become a book reviewer without a genuine regard and concern for books. If there are exceptions which fit a stereotype of reviewers as frustrated novelists and biographers and poets who express their spleen in castigating novels and biographies and poetry, they can hardly serve Mr. Wagner's argument that reviewers, as opposed to their betters, are too uncritically generous in their praise. The book reviewer welcomes the new book with anticipation, or the chances are that he will not want to continue as a book reviewer. It is the imaginary reviewer who is appalled and repulsed by the making of many books of which there is no end, as Walter in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* who surveyed the stacks of books for Shorter Notices and found: "It was a Literary Feast—a feast of offal. Bad novels and worthless verses, imbecile systems of philosophy and platitudinous moralizings, insignificant biographies and boring books of travel . . . the pile was high, and every week it grew higher."

Nor do I believe, as Mr. Wagner suggests, and here I think unworthily, that the reviewer is much motivated by the payment

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he receives. ("What's more, he wants the forty dollars for another review, which he won't get, he's quite sure, if he's overderogatory.") I know at least several ways in which I can make forty dollars with less time and effort than are involved in carefully reading a book and writing a review of it for the *New York Herald Tribune* or the *New York Times*, and certainly with less discomfort than would be involved in writing a review which expressed something other than my honest opinion of the book.

For newspaper book sections outside New York this consideration is hardly likely to exist at all. I wrote reviews with some regularity for the *Washington Post*, a newspaper of circulation and influence, in the days when its book section was ably edited by Joseph Michael Lalley. For columns on the editorial page on bookish or other subjects the standard payment was five dollars a column. For book reviews the payment was none at all. I doubt if this situation is unique. From time to time, during nearly twenty years, I have contributed reviews of books, which for one reason or another have particularly interested me, to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the most influential newspaper in my native Virginia. I have yet to be paid by it for a review.

It is, of course, true that relatively few newspapers in the United States maintain much in the way of book review sections. The reasons, I assume, hardly need elaboration. But even here I am not sure that there has been a *decline*. The surprising thing is how often, sometimes with a college or university nearby to draw upon, newspaper review sections contain sound and perceptive reviewing. I examined some forty or fifty newspaper reviews of my *Virginia Reader* and again of my *Jefferson Reader*. In many cases the level of reviewing was quite comparable to that in the professional journals.

It is not to these, however, that Mr. Wagner's remarks are chiefly addressed, but to the "large reviewing media." I believe that here his diagnosis is very wide of the mark. I submit that in the "large reviewing media," if by that orotund phrase Mr. Wagner means, as I take it he does, the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, there has *not* been a decline in the quality of book reviewing, that standards as high as or higher than at any time in the past quarter century or more are maintained, and that they are good standards.

I am quite sure that it would be possible for Mr. Wagner to cite an example to support each of his allegations of sins of commission and of omission. The very mathematics of publishing and reviewing make it improbable that he could fail. The *New York Herald Tribune* and the *New York Times* must receive for review in any year a minimum of four or five thousand books. A rough check of the *Herald Tribune*, which has the smaller Sunday book section of the two, suggests that of these four or five thousand books it reviews something in the order of eleven or twelve hundred in a year, and that it considers another thousand in its reviews of children's books, mysteries, and science fiction, and in its "Books in Brief" column. It would be an odd thing if occasionally it were not the case that a book of merit failed to be assigned for review, or a book of little merit was reviewed, or there was an unhappy conjunction of book and reviewer. Where I think Mr. Wagner is wholly wrong is in his suggestion that these are not exceptions but the rule, that the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* have "driven the critics from their doors," and that it is a matter of policy to praise extravagantly and to praise the worthless.

I cannot recall that in ten years of contributing to the *Herald Tribune* I have ever used the phrase "the best novel of the year" (though surely some novel *is*) or "a work of genius," phrases which Mr. Wagner sees as the common and debased coin of book reviewing. I have not been spendthrift even with his smaller change of "brilliant" and "superb" and "important," and looking about the columns of the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* I have not found this bright specie strewn quite so plentifully as he suggests.

When I have reviewed for the *Herald*

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Tribune a new book by Robert Penn Warren or Caroline Gordon or William Faulkner or Eudora Welty, I have not intended that the specific comment on one book should compete with critical essays on the whole body of work by an author. I do not believe that it is the function of a review to attempt to do so. The book review is an immediate comment upon an individual book. The reviewer has, perhaps, a week or two to read a new and unknown book and to write his review. He has space at his command for, at most, a thousand words or so. Within these limitations of time and space the reviewer, it seems to me, must give both some description of the book and, drawing upon the whole range of his reading and whatever critical resources he has, some evaluation of it. I believe that, week after week, many reviewers in the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* succeed admirably.

Perception is the quality which justifies the book reviewer, and perception may be displayed by pointing to virtues which are not immediately apparent no less than by pointing to flaws which are not advertised on the book jacket. A good many first novels and other work by authors near the beginning of their careers have come my way for review, and it has been a satisfying thing to record from time to time what has seemed to me the ring of unmistakable talent. Looking back over the recent past, I am not sure that I would revise the few words that I have had to say about such new and different books as Shirley Ann Grau's *The Black Prince and Other Stories* or LeRoy Leatherman's *The Caged Birds* or Gwendolyn Brooks's *Maud Martha* or Jefferson Young's *A Good Man* or Robert K. Marshall's *Little Squire Jim* or Bernice Kavinoky's *Honey from a Dark Hive.*

The book reviewer could, of course, roundly damn every book that comes to him for review with little fear of protest from posterity. If by some improbable chance a reader half a century hence should be concerned with the reviewer's microfilmed newsprint, the damning of every book as one soon to be forgotten would seem to show a high degree of perspicacity and prescience. If some *Moby Dick* were dismissed as pedestrian nonsense or some *Tamerlane* as merely cacophonous jingles, the reviewer's average would necessarily still be enormously high. But the reviewer's audience is not posterity. (It is just possible that the critic's is not either.) The reviewer's audience is not even Mr. Wagner's "visitor from Mars, knowing nothing of our literary scene." His audience is to be found here and now, and it is his job, as I see it, to supply such guidance as he is able among today's books for today's readers.

This is guidance, for whatever it is worth, that the reader is not likely to get from the critical essay. If Mr. Wagner had cared to, he could have quoted further from *The Armed Vision* that ours is "a time when most serious criticism only analyzes and interprets, and when the reader of critical articles has to go to the newspaper reviewer to find out whether the work is any good or not"—even if he "then is misinformed more often than not."

I must admit that I am enough of a Jeffersonian that I am not much impressed with Mr. Wagner's implicit suggestion that more widespread reading is a danger ("the tastes of the masses," "the whole heterogeneous public") or that literary standards cannot be maintained in the face of an increased literacy. The publication in quantity in an inexpensive paperback edition of "the professional critic's strictures," which Mr. Wagner quotes with approval, hardly serves to support the suggestion.

Except for the bromidic "one may surely advocate that the average book review be better written," Mr. Wagner's prescription, it seems to me, is as faulty as his diagnosis. He urges the "homogeneity of approach," whether it is that in the *Times Literary Supplement* or in *Time*, of the anonymous book section. Then "most of the reviewers will have somewhat the same standards, and the alert reader can soon formulate a yardstick," and this will free the reader from coping with a "vitiating and annoying confusion of levels."

I am not at all sure that either homogeneity or anonymity is to be desired. As

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to the first, this can be a prescription not for more exacting reviewing but only more uniform. A goal of homogeneity is as likely to be achieved by a leveling downward as otherwise. Is what Mr. Wagner sees as "totally different reviewing standards obtaining, even on the same page" quite the evil which he believes? Is it perhaps not useful for the historical novel to be reviewed as a historical novel, with the reviewer evaluating it in terms of others of its kind? A finding that such a book is an engaging costume romance does not, it seems to me, imply that it is superior to another book of a quite different kind, a new study of Henry James or a new volume of poems by Richard Wilbur, which is evaluated in terms of others of its kind. In any event, I doubt if the reader is as confounded by this "bathetic confusion of kind," to the extent that it in fact exists, as Mr. Wagner believes, or that this causes the reader to trust the reviewer "less and less."

As to anonymity, the "alert reader," it seems to me, has a far better yardstick when he knows not merely *where* he is reading a review but knows *whose* comment he is reading. This is true even when the reviewers are of quite comparable competence. I find it useful to know, when I am reading a review in the *New York Times* of a new book of verse, whether the views are those, say, of Dudley Fitts or Horace Gregory. Knowing the identity of the reviewer is of no less value to the reader (not just to authors who may want to "know whose nose they want to punch") in the case of a novel or a collection of short stories or essays or a volume of biography or history. The reader's yardstick is then not only a general level of competence but the specific qualifications of the individual reviewer.

In practice, I think, anonymity is likely to result in not more but less competent reviewing. (Even THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR has replaced its unsigned "Brief Comments" with signed.) Surely Mr. Wagner's argument for anonymity further involves a basic inconsistency. If it is true (though I do not believe it is) that the pressures in the "large reviewing media" are such that "the university critic, with standards to maintain, with the eyes of his colleagues upon him," is hard put, would not even such restraints as are imposed by his colleagues' watchfulness be removed in the anonymous book section?

"But all the same one knows where one is when reading *Time*," writes Mr. Wagner. True enough, but is this quite where one wants to be? Without considering the very limited number of books which are reviewed or their selection, if Mr. Wagner really means to suggest that the level of reviewing in the Luce news magazine is the standard to which reviewers should repair, then I have little common ground for discussion with him.

FRANCIS COLEMAN ROSENBERGER

In reply to the comment which you published in your Winter issue from R. L. Duffus regarding my article on the Bandung Conference:

I have too much confidence in the integrity of the Western press in general, and the best American journalists in particular, to believe that there was on the part of that press and those journalists a willful intent to overlook the *prime* importance that the conferees at Bandung gave to racialism and colonialism.

I do believe, however, that the Western press simply did not understand that the organizing principle at Bandung was anti-racialism and anti-colonialism, and that, therefore, the dispatches in the Western press read very much as though the big news at Bandung was anti-communism. I believe that the Western press was in error. My article, "The Meaning of Bandung," tried, perhaps presumptuously, to explain and right the error.

SAUNDERS REDDING

Professor Robert Langbaum's review of my book *In Search of Heresy* in the Winter issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR seemed

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to me very nearly a model of misunderstanding. Yet I doubt that I have ever before been misunderstood with quite so much genuine consideration and tact. Professor Langbaum clearly made an effort—which at times was just as clearly an effort of patience—to be fair to the book, and I believe that, allowing for the distance between his reasoning and mine, he was fair. But the distance was a factor which even his fairness could not take into account, nor can I in equal fairness leave it out.

One probably has one's first intimation of this distance at the moment in his opening paragraph when Professor Langbaum observes that certain of the polemical articles in the book, "having lost immediacy while retaining the tone of immediacy, seem in many places to be picking a fight where there is no occasion for one." The assumption here is apparently that if the articles were really good, they would still seem immediate, but that since they no longer seem so, the *tone* of immediacy which they retain stands as an intrusion and an annoyance. They have no right, in other words, to sound immediate unless they actually are, and we have only Professor Langbaum's word for it that they are not. I find it difficult to understand, first, how he can account for the presence of the tone of immediacy unless he admits that the articles were immediate at one time or, at any rate, that I felt them to be when I was writing them, and, second, to which period of polemical discussion the articles should seem immediate, if not to the period of their composition.

I will readily grant—and I am sure that Professor Langbaum would agree—that one of the crippling features of the last several years for the intellectual has been the absence of continuity in the life of ideas. We have no arena of discourse in which ideas and controversies over ideas can be kept current long enough for us to engage them properly or even to understand them properly, and we have become so sensitized to the influx of new knowledge—and, above all, to our own accelerating sophistication of taste in knowledge—that the discovery of one new fact about an old idea, or simply the experience of hearing an idea discussed more than once, is often enough to cause us to abandon the idea to the limbo of outdatedness. We are all, in short, victims of that "predilection for the latest thing" of which Professor Langbaum accuses me in his opening sentence, and, if I understand him rightly in his remarks on the need for immediacy and originality, he is himself equally a victim. Still, I must confess to sharing to a certain extent his feelings about some of the essays. They do seem a trifle dated (perhaps because I have heard myself discuss them more than once); the issues with which they deal do belong, sadly enough, to the past, if only to the past of three and five years ago, just as the emotions behind them belong to a stage of growth which I like to feel I have now safely negotiated. Whether this would be equally true of any essays written in the heat of a controversy now years past, it is difficult to say, for it has not been the fashion for some time to write such essays or to publish them in book form—the reason being, I suppose, that writers do not wish to seem outdated almost before they have time to get their work into print. This, of course, is where Professor Langbaum has me and I have him. In publishing the essays, I was guilty of an unfashionable, though perhaps courageous act. He was guilty of seeming to condemn me for it in the context of an attack on my fashionableness and my timidity.

Nonetheless, I want to remind him that during the years when the essays were being conceived and written, the issues they discuss did have great immediacy. Riesman's work in *The Lonely Crowd* had at the time the look of an original insight into the changed nature of American culture; it had not yet become chic to sneer at his conservatism and inconsistencies. My effort, therefore, to apply his formulations to the then current condition of the novel seemed to me an important and necessary thing to do. Between 1951 and 1953, *Partisan Review* had published no less than four essays, communications and rejoinders on the

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function of social manners (not *etiquette*) in fiction; one of the last of these took the form of an attack by Delmore Schwartz upon Lionel Trilling's and my view of the meaning of manners. I wrote a reply to Schwartz and a defense of Trilling and myself which became in the book the essay entitled "The Heresy of Literary Manners." In it I rebuked Schwartz in a tone which I tried to make commensurate with the severity, although not the absurdity, of his attack, and I tried to demonstrate—I believe in an original way—precisely how manners function to give dramatic tension to fiction. Mr. Trilling's treatment of the subject had always been general and abstract; mine was specific and concrete, and so in that way new.

Professor Langbaum says that in my essay on the writer in the university I "picked up" a subject ready-made by earlier commentators like Randall Jarrell and Irving Howe. Once again he is confusing the date of publication with the time of composition. When I wrote the essay, Mr. Howe's "This Age of Conformity" piece (*Partisan Review*, January-February, 1954) had not yet appeared, and I had not seen Mr. Jarrell's. Besides, the essay in its final book form had been revised into an examination not only of the writer in the university but also of conformist tendencies among intellectuals generally (specifically, *Partisan Review* intellectuals), and the central section on the university writers had been cast as a reply to Charles Fenton who, in an article in *New World Writing* # 7, seemed to be arguing not simply that the universities are the best places for writers to be, but that most of the best writers are already in them. I thought it necessary to demonstrate statistically that this is not quite the case.

Professor Langbaum's whole discussion of originality and the lack of it in my book seems to me to turn on a series of misapprehensions about the current literary situation and the function of criticism within it. He should not need to be reminded of just how very little of the criticism now taken as authoritative is original in the sense he is using the word. Eliot, Blackmur, Tate, Trilling, Wilson, Ransom and Richards all derive from predecessors; in fact, the criticism commonly thought of as "new" represents a fresh application of insights which were long familiar in the aesthetic criticism stemming from Baudelaire and Coleridge and in the classical criticism stemming from Aristotle. Are we not all indebted in the same manner to our predecessors and older contemporaries, particularly now in a time when the terms of the modern critical movement constitute the very language of professional discourse and some of the basic problems raised in that discourse are still to be solved? Presumably, Professor Langbaum would like to see set forth in a "heretical" book like mine a whole new critical rationale; anything less would seem to him unoriginal. Yet one can argue that such a view of the present function of heresy is itself unoriginal as well as romantic and old-fashioned. That is simply not the original work which our present situation demands or even makes possible. What is left for us to do is to make new use of the established methods and to *discover* new use for them in areas and in relation to materials not yet explored. Such original work as may be found in my book is of this kind.

Professor Langbaum suggests that my "predilection for the latest thing" led me, in 1947, to publish an article on the new postwar generation of American writers—"before anyone else had got around to it." He implies that my motive was simply to get there first and that almost anyone else would have written such an article had he been able to spare the time or thought it really worth doing. I think that the point to remember is that no one else did get around to it then or subsequently; hence, within Professor Langbaum's definition of originality, I was apparently original, although since I was twenty-four at the time and just out of college, I was probably merely innocent. I had read up my *Exile's Return* (in the unrevised and unfashionable 1934 edition) and was heavy with speculation whether my generation would also be "lost." I had as well a sincere, however

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innocent, desire to see the younger writers launched, and I wanted to be the kind of critic who would help in the launching, and not the kind some of the older men seemed to have become, with their devotion exclusively to Dante and James and their cavalier attitudes toward everything contemporary and untried. The same interests motivated my first book, *After the Lost Generation*: I wanted to be active in and possibly have some effect on the literary situation of my own time. Whether or not the impulse was original, it was at least honest, and its originality can be determined by the amount of company I had and still have in the field, the number of *After the Lost Generation*'s measured against the number of books on Melville and James.

The markedly original portions of *In Search of Heresy* are probably those demonstrating precisely how manners operate as dramatic agents in fiction; how Riesman's insights may be used to explain at least partially the present state of the novel; how the so-called Hemingway "code" functions as a distinct dramatic formula; how conformism among American intellectuals has resulted in a politically distorted view of the writer's position and function; and how the environment of the South affords the writer specific dramatic materials. If some of these subjects *as subjects* seem to Professor Langbaum to have about them an air of triteness, that fact too was part of my quite deliberate design. I had been troubled by the tendency of critics to dismiss as preposterous, without bothering at all to explore them, such questions as those of manners and the South. I felt that the critics had become so obsessed with a notion of these ideas as clichés that they could not recognize in them the truth which had helped them to become clichés. My purpose was to cut through the cliché exterior in each case and try to reveal the truth in fresh terms. If I succeeded in doing this, then the book made the kind of contribution it was intended to make. It was not designed, however, to make the kind Professor Langbaum seems to have wished for it. It is quite simply a book of literary commentaries and polemics, representing an effort to apply, in some instances, the findings of others to problems of special concern to me and, where necessary, to set my own views in relation or opposition to the established view. I intended, in short, to write an interim book, the sort for which, in a lifetime of books, there should be room in any writer's career. It is perhaps one of our difficulties in this country today that we have forgotten the precedent for such books, that we insist that, to deserve our attention at all, a book must be authoritative, definitive and final. I might have provided a reminder of the precedent I mean by choosing the more Continental title of *Reflections* or *Thoughts*, but American publishers would rather be flashy than accurate.

But I imagine that the real basis of Professor Langbaum's complaint was emotional: he was simply put off by the disputatious tone of the book. He could not stand to see a younger man presumably like himself talk this way and get by with it; in my dogmatism and seeming self-confidence I positively ached to be cut down to size. Yet I believe that had Professor Langbaum's lust for vengeance been less overpowering he might have realized that because there is so little of this kind of talk going on now, it should be recognized when it does appear as having a certain value, if only the value of scarcity. He might also have realized that, take them for better or worse, my books are the only ones available which seriously question the prevailing view that our literature really stopped around 1929, and which show a concern with the writers and literary issues of our own generation. These are presumably the writers and issues over which Professor Langbaum and I will be attacking each other when we are fifty, and most of our distinguished older contemporaries are no longer exactly in the forefront. That fact should count for a little. It might even bespeak a certain kind of originality.

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The Far East and Fiction

THE SETTING SUN. By Osamu Dazai. Translated by Donald Keene. *New York: New Directions. 189 pp. $3.00.*

THE FRONTIERS OF LOVE. By Diana Chang. *New York: Random House. 246 pp. $3.50.*

THE SOUND OF WAVES. By Yukio Mishima. Translated by Meredith Weatherby. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 183 pp. $3.00.*

Reviewed by KAY BOYLE

The last time I saw Ezra Pound was in the late summer of 1938, just before Munich, in the golden light of Rapallo, when he was deep in the process of discovering the literature and, in particular, the poetry of Japan. Two young Japanese poets, students in Italy, were among his close companions, and the West was of little interest or use to him except as it reaffirmed the traditions of the past. The work of Junichiro Tanizaki, perhaps Japan's greatest contemrary writer, was then not known to me, but I realize now that the theories Ezra Pound was shouting about so loudly in Italy were, in great part, the same as those that Tanizaki was speaking of in fervent humility in Japan. "The Westerner has been able to move forward in ordered steps," Tanizaki wrote in 1934, "while we have met a superior civilization and have had to surrender to it, and we have had to leave a road we have followed for thousands of years. . . . If we had been left alone, we might not be much farther now materially than we were five hundred years ago. Even now in the Indian and Chinese countryside, life no doubt goes on much as it did when Buddha and Confucius were alive. . . . But we would have gone only in a direction that suited us. We would have gone ahead very slowly, and yet it is not impossible that we would one day have discovered our own substitute for the trolley, the radio, the airplane of today. They would have been no borrowed mechanisms, but rather the tools of our own culture, suited to us. . . ."

Because Ezra Pound was among the first to agitate for a wider recognition of the body of Japanese literature, I speak of him here; but his fury over the impingement of the materialistic world of Western progress on the spirit of man carried him to extremes that left Tanizaki far behind. For if Ezra Pound spoke with eloquence of the work of Japanese poets as possessing a sensitivity, a delicacy, as fragile as a spider's web and yet as enduring as stone, he cried out as well that fascism was the only belief that could redeem all poets and save the individual from being cast in American treasury gold. He insisted that the qualities which were valued so highly in Japanese prints were present in Japanese writing as well, and he blasted the intellectuals of the West who were deaf to the music and meaning of Japanese poetry, and ignorant of the *Tanka* and the *Haiku* and the *Shintaishi*. There was no way, in the end, to follow where Pound sought to lead as he damned the Chinese for absorbing the essence of Japanese culture and palming it off for centuries as their own, or as he herded into that compound of hate within him all Jews as the symbols of American culture, and branded dollar signs on their anonymous flesh.

What awareness of his own human inadequacy cast this dark shadow over Ezra Pound's almost painfully illuminated intelligence? In the lighted area of his mind, he saw Japanese literature with the greatest clarity, and saw even beyond its immediate situation to what would come, as a prophet might. Nearly twenty years ago, he foresaw the crucial dilemma in which the Japanese artist and the Japanese writer were to find

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✪ KAY BOYLE, who has lived for many years in Europe, is now writing and teaching in Connecticut. She is the author of twenty-five books, the most recent being a novel entitled *The Seagull on the Step.*

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themselves after the war—a war which had not yet begun and in which Ezra Pound was to choose the losing side.

This critical situation of the educated Japanese is given a violent personal history in Osamu Dazai's novel, *The Setting Sun*. But aside from the meaning of the book as a testament of despair for all those Japanese who were dislocated and impoverished by the war, by inflation, by the land reforms—aside, too, from the sheer wonder and purity of Dazai's prose—this book is important for the simple reason that the characters are as alive as if they walked into a Western room and touched one's hand. All over Japan, the term "people of the setting sun" means the dispossessed, and in Dazai's book they are the members of an aristocratic Japanese family—mother, daughter and son—who belong to the ceremonious, shadowy traditions of the East and yet who must, if they are to survive, accept the blatant, neon impact of the West. Kazuko, the daughter, in her late twenties, is beautiful, sensitive and aquiver with the gentle, unquestioning humility of the Far Eastern woman, a humility that makes it natural for her, after her own marriage has ended in divorce, to lead the lives of her fragile mother and her dissolute brother rather than her own. "You may belong to the nobility, for all I know," a neighbor says to Kazuko who has inadvertently set fire to the little villa where she and her mother have withdrawn in poverty, "but I've been watching with my heart in my mouth the way you two have been living, like children playing house."

Like two lovely, patient, rather uncertain little girls, they tend the garden, sell their expensive clothes in order to live, eat American canned food that is rationed to them, and wait for news of Naoji, the brother and son, listed as missing in action in the South Pacific. When he returns, he comes in personal defeat, bringing with him the curse of his own weaknesses. In his notebooks, his "Moonflower Journal," which Kazuko reads as she arranges his room for his return, he had written even before going to war:

> Philosophy? Lies. Principles? Lies. Ideals? Lies. Order? Lies. Sincerity? Truth? Purity? All lies. . . . Learning is another name for vanity. It is the effort of human beings not to be human beings.

The disruption of all values conditioned Naoji's past and his present, and would have conditioned his future as well, and one knows that it is Dazai himself speaking his grief through him. Dazai was born into a rich, landowning family, and first attempted suicide when he was barely twenty—in despair, it is said, over his aristocratic origin. A year later, in 1930, he again sought to take his own life, this time with a bar girl who died. Burdened with the guilt of his wealth and his caste, Dazai became active in the Communist movement while a student at the Tokyo Imperial University, was arrested and imprisoned. Twice in the next four years he attempted suicide, and a final attempt, in 1948, after he had come into prominence as a writer in Japan, resulted in his death by drowning with the woman he loved, who had borne him a child. But this book is far from the complete negation that was Dazai's life, for in it a great hope and a great promise are offered without cynicism for those who wish to find them there.

The promise and hope reside, to a large extent, in Dazai's decision to write the story from a woman's viewpoint, and thus to wring the meaning of his own life—and Naoji's—without mercy from Kazuko's tender, spirited heart. (This, incidentally, is the same decision he took in writing his now celebrated story, "Villon's Wife," which appeared in *New Directions 15*, and it is a decision that must have demanded nearly as great a degree of courage from Dazai as did his decision to die by his own hand.) There may have been any number of reasons why he chose to tell the story through Kazuko's eyes: perhaps to limit the perspective to a woman's narrower horizon, perhaps to establish those moral standards which women will uphold long after men have cast all standards violently aside. Kazuko's selflessness and patience and loyalty, which Dazai makes seem so true, serve

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as well to reveal Naoji in all his depravity and decadence. "Perhaps by depravity," Kazuko reflects as she reads Naoji's notebooks, "he actually meant tenderness."

It is Kazuko who, in the end, bears the hope of Dazai's tortured life to tentative fulfillment. Through poverty, loneliness, bereavement and the experience of one sordid night with a drunken, aging writer, Kazuko emerges even more lovely and unblemished, and it is this, one knows without question, that Dazai intended all along. While Naoji proceeds from drugs to alcohol, alcohol to suicide, Kazuko, in all her purity, writes to the dissolute author, who is her brother's friend and the father of her unborn child:

> It is you who have put the rainbow of revolution in my breast. It is you who have given an object to my life. . . . I cannot possibly think of it in terms of a "hideous mistake" or anything of the sort. . . . There is in my heart the stillness of a marsh in the forest. I think I have won.

A book by a man almost always offers the full-length portrait of its author. Women writers, on the other hand, are frequently on the defensive, and they rely on style to give the likeness of themselves another look. Perhaps they can be classified merely as competent or incompetent; and the competent ones annoy, the incompetent distress. But in reading Diana Chang's *The Frontiers of Love*, it occurred to me that competency in a woman or a woman writer can be appealing as long as there also is present the charm of hesitancy and uncertainty. In this story, set in Shanghai in the final weeks of the war, the lives of three young Eurasians, Sylvia Chen, Mimi Lambert and Feng Huang, become our engrossing concern due to Miss Chang's poetic, feminine and completely fallible competency. This is the first novel of a young and gifted Barnard graduate, born in New York, whose mother is Eurasian, and who went to China to live when only a few months old. It was written in English, and is a beautiful and sensitive piece of work. Here, the Japanese is the occupier, the enemy, and the circumference of Sylvia Chen's world, like Kazuko's, is bound by her intuitions rather than any absolute knowledge of the activities of men. Within this extremely personal world, Sylvia Chen, who would seem to be some portion of the author herself, establishes her own profoundly human dignity.

Sylvia's mother, Helen, is American; her father, Liyi, Chinese. While Helen longs to "take in a Broadway show or spend a weekend in Connecticut" or go to "the Cloisters, or the Frick Museum" or "have dinner at the Tavern on the Green," Liyi is aware that in China "the dead hand of the scholar was being repudiated, the modern spoken language advocated over the classical literary language for all forms of art and communication." He knew that "Confucius was being supplanted by Christ and John Dewey; free love was taking the place of family-arranged marriages; emulation of the West was replacing ancestor worship; birth control . . . proletarian literature, co-education, divorce" were destroying "the subtleties of a double standard of morality for men and women." And Sylvia, like the whole of the Far East, is split by the two. It is through Feng Huang, half-British (christened Farthington by his Yorkshire mother), that the powerful appeal of communism for the dispossessed becomes clear to Sylvia. "You have lived all your lives in China. But do you know it?" cries Feng-Farthington, the bewildered, angry man with English freckles on his Asiatic skin. "Do you have an iota of curiosity about the country? . . . All of you have held your noses and yearned for America."

The Setting Sun and *The Frontiers of Love* are very different books, and yet Naoji and Feng Huang are very similar men, and if Sylvia's decision is not, in act, the same as Kazuko's, it is of a like integrity. In both books, it is through a tender and sensitive woman's acceptance of passion that the best of man's belief is redeemed. "For each man was his own witness," Sylvia reflects. "It was a responsibility and a gift you could not evade." Dazai's Naoji rejects it in suicide, and Miss Chang's Feng Huang through communism; but in the

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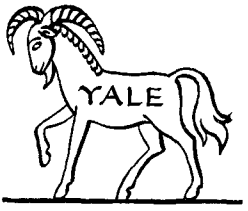

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spirit and flesh of the women who sought to understand them is the means of transition offered, and, in both books, the hope is as clearly articulated as the despair.

The Sound of Waves by Yukio Mishima is a love story so simple and guileless that one wonders how it could have been written in a year and a country in which thousands akin to Naoji draw anguished breath. According to a recent article by Mark Schorer, police records show that there are three hundred thousand hoodlums in Japan, and a 50 per cent increase in crime this year as compared to last. Ninety per cent of the criminals in present-day Japan, Schorer reports, are between fifteen and twenty years old; and this tragic situation is due in great part to the too rapid Westernizing of the country, to the precipitate democratization, and the subsequent decline of parental authority. But Mishima's book begins with the lines: "Uta-Jima—Song Island—has only about fourteen hundred inhabitants and a coastline of something under three miles"; from there it proceeds to tell the love story of Shinji, a young fisherman, and Hatsue, whose father is the richest man on the island. In this book, parental authority is still all-powerful, the young still revere the dead and the aged, and only in the young villain is there evidence of that fatal impingement of an alien civilization upon the traditions sacred to Japan.

Yukio Mishima is a successful author in his own country, who, at the age of thirty-one, already has a list of fifty volumes to his name. This, the first of his to be translated into English, is written with vigor and simplicity—a simplicity, according to some reports, in sharp contrast with the sophistication of some of his other works. "Men go out fishing," Mishima writes. "They board their coasting ships and carry cargo to all sorts of ports. Women, not destined for that wide world, cook rice, draw water, gather seaweed, and when summer comes dive into the water, down to the deep sea's bottom. Even for a mother who was a veteran among diving women this twilight world of the sea's bottom was the world of women. . . ."

Hatsue, the beautiful young girl, is a sea diver, a profession at which Shinji's widowed mother has made her living and supported her two sons. One of the most charming and natural scenes in the book is the most-beautiful-breasts contest which the women divers hold on the beach under a strong noonday sun; another, the scene in the observation tower when Shinji and Hatsue confront each other naked across the fire the boy has built to dry his clothes. There are action, poetry and young good humor in the book; and in the wasps who seemingly connive to save Hatsue from rape, in the physical ordeals through which Shinji must pass before he may wake the princess of his dreams from virgin sleep, there are myth and legend as well. But whether or not this book was written with the supersophistication of a Radiguet or of the Hemingway of *The Old Man and the Sea*—a sophistication so disciplined and selective that it presents the exact image of simplicity—I do not know.

The Indefatigable Journalist

BOSWELL IN SEARCH OF A WIFE, 1766-1769. Edited by Frank Brady and Frederick A. Pottle. Illustrated. *New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 390 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by DELANCEY FERGUSON

In this latest canto of his saga, the inimitable and indefatigable Boswell essays three proofs that he has reached maturity. Home at last from the Grand Tour, he begins to practice the legal profession for which he had so reluctantly trained; he achieves some celebrity as an author; he makes a sensible marriage and prepares to settle down. These events are chronicled in journals, which tend to lapse at the most interesting moments, and in some 550 letters

DELANCEY FERGUSON has edited *The Letters of Robert Burns* and the recently published *R. L. S., Stevenson's Letters to Charles Baxter.* He is author of *Pride and Passion: Robert Burns* and *Mark Twain, Man and Legend.*

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sent or received by Boswell during the thirty months which the volume covers.

Boswell didn't want to be a lawyer. Precisely what he did want to do, besides combining philosophy and raking, was never clear for very long at a time. But paternal pressure won at last; Boswell qualified for membership in the Faculty of Advocates in July, 1766. As the son of a judge, he was in a favored position at the start and earned about two hundred pounds in fees during his first year. Moreover, once he had taken the plunge he rather enjoyed the work to which he had been conscripted. "A pressed man either by sea or land," he observed, "after a little time does just as well as a volunteer." In short, everything except his temperament pointed toward a successful career at the bar.

Eighteen months after his admission to the bar Boswell won literary and political fame with his *Account of Corsica*. The fame, too, was accompanied with enough cash return from the book to prompt Sir John Pringle to warn him that writing for money was "below a gentleman." So, presumably, was advertising; but Boswell helped the sale of the book, and the Corsican cause as well, with faked news items in the papers and his famed appearance in Corsican costume at the Shakespeare Jubilee. He had also done some highly partisan pamphleteering in the once famous "Douglas Cause," and was generally believed to have helped the mob which smashed his father's windows when the verdict was announced. Everything, except Boswell's temperament, pointed to an equally successful career in literature.

But to consolidate his social position and his finances he felt that he should marry an heiress. Although he had several eligible candidates in view, he married none of them, having conducted his courtships in such a way that he was sure to be refused if and when he mustered his courage to the proposing point. The fact was that for all his raking Boswell was afraid of women of his own class; if, like Belle de Zuylen, the woman had brains he was downright terrified. It is little wonder, then, that he ended by marrying "that valuable woman," Margaret Montgomerie, a first cousin who was two years his senior. George Dempster said he had never expected Boswell to do anything so rational. He certainly could not have married anyone who better understood him: she had known him all his life; she had watched his quests of heiresses; she knew his most intimate secrets, including the fact that he was under treatment for his latest bout of venereal infection. She was to have some unhappy times as Mrs. Boswell, for marriage did not change her husband's temperament. But Jamie was what she wanted, and she got him.

For the rest, the journals and letters of these years play the same endless changes on the Boswell theme—the same resolutions to be quiet and discreet in company constantly breaking down into noise and exhibitionism, the same vows of sobriety and chastity ending in renewed tours of the brothels. Frank as Boswell is, he is not a second Pepys in either situation or character. Even as petticoat chasers they are not alike, Pepys being far more fastidious. Both are egotists, but Pepys does not dramatize himself. Although he records his delight over his new bookcases, his silverware, the favorable state of his accounts at the month's end, when he pats himself on the back it is usually for some job well done at the office or the dockyard. Boswell, posturing before his mirror, rejoicing in the possession of "one of the most singular minds ever was formed," is permanently adolescent in comparison with the steady Secretary of the Admiralty.

These dissimilar personalities, moreover, functioned in widely different surroundings. Pepys was a public officer in the center of national affairs. He saw the governmental machinery of Restoration England at close range. He saw history being made, and set down with matchless clarity the details of what he saw. Any survivor might have written his record of the Plague and the Fire; no one else could so vividly have pictured the seamy side of the Dutch wars. In contrast, Boswell lived for the most part in a small circle of provincial society; his

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most extensive contact with national and international affairs came from his brief weeks in Corsica and his continued friendship with the exiled Paoli. He moved in the best society in Edinburgh, but that society in the 1760's and 1770's included few first-rate minds except David Hume, whose agnosticism so frightened Boswell that he rarely attempted to draw out the philosopher as he did Johnson. Only on his cherished visits to London did he find minds large enough to lift him out of his feuding with his father and his love affair with himself. But it is to his everlasting credit that he recognized first-rate minds when he met them. The Johnsonian portions of the journals are perennially good reading; the rest become slightly monotonous in large doses.

When the Boswell Papers are completely edited in a research edition they will fill thirty or forty volumes in addition to the full-scale biography which Professor Pottle has in preparation. *Boswell in Search of a Wife* is the fifth volume of the "popular" edition, launched in 1950 with the *London Journal, 1762-1763*, and it ends at Christmas, 1769. Such a rate of progress raises some fundamental questions about editorial policy.

The piecemeal recovery of these papers posed unique editorial problems. No comparable mass of literary documents had ever before been found; no precedents existed for handling it. The original plan of publication was a costly blunder; and by the time it was completed, additional finds at Fettercairn and Malahide had made it already obsolete.

Colonel Isham's privately printed edition of his original Malahide purchase is the chief literary monument to the inflation of the 1920's. It comprised eighteen volumes to be sold to subscribers at $900 a set; only 570 copies were printed. But during the Depression so many subscribers defaulted that secondhand sets sold for a fraction of the original price. Geoffrey Scott, the first editor, had planned a rather belletristic work, with separate, smallish volumes devoted to self-contained episodes, like the "Zelide" courtship. But Scott died, and when Professor Pottle and his Yale associates took over they began printing all the rough notes and secondary material which Scott had intended to omit. The resulting volumes, expensive and oversize though they were, might have stood as the permanent "research" edition had Isham's first haul been final. But the croquet box trove at Malahide was damaging; the subsequent finds there and at Fettercairn were ruinous. The whole job had to be done over again from the beginning.

The greatest single treasure from the croquet box was the original journal of the Hebrides tour, and this, in 1936, was the first of the papers made available to the public in a trade edition. It was an auspicious start which had no sequel for fourteen years. Part of the delay was due to war; part to litigation over the Fettercairn documents; part, one guesses, to disappointing sales of the Hebrides volume. At any rate, when trade publication resumed in 1950 it was under a new contract with new publishers.

Here again the start was auspicious. The London Journal of 1762 was wholly unpublished except for the bits used in the *Life of Johnson*; it had unity of time and place; it showed Boswell in his first bright plumage as chronicler of himself. But the ensuing volumes on Holland and the Grand Tour were a letdown. The Holland Journal is lost, so that volume was cobbled together from letters, memoranda and literary exercises. Boswell, moreover, was behaving himself and was therefore comparatively dull. For the first volume of the Grand Tour the journals were again available, but their record of visits to the petty German courts is repetitious. The gem of the second volume was Boswell's magnificent account of his interviews with Voltaire and Rousseau. Although the third volume should have been enthralling, it wasn't. Boswell never wrote up the Italian Journal, and he himself printed the Corsican one. The editors, in reprinting this, were therefore using material which has been available to the public for nearly two hundred years.

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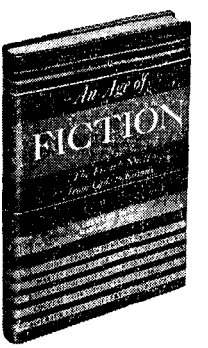

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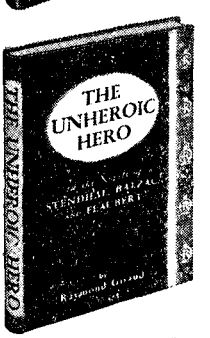

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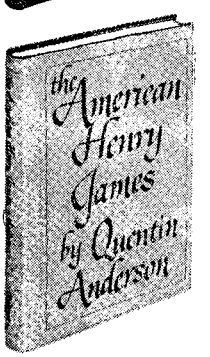

THE AMERICAN HENRY JAMES *by Quentin Anderson* **$6.50**

This, indeed, is a new kind of James book. It contends that Henry James, though he lived in England and traveled on the Continent most of his adult life, was never essentially an expatriate. Professor Anderson's thesis is that James's Americanism and his heritage from his father were essential to his art. In his description of James as "a moralist of a particular sort, who emerged from a particular scene," he adds a new and vigorous dimension to the world of James criticism. Whatever the controversy this book arouses among James scholars, it is sure to provide the devoted readers of James's novels with a more coherent approach to his work, especially to those novels which have been hardest to evaluate: *The Sacred Fount, The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl.*

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Similar re-use of previously published material appears in *Boswell in Search of a Wife*. The sporadically kept journals are supplemented by reprinting letters to W. J. Temple which have been in print expurgated for more than a century and unexpurgated since Chauncey B. Tinker's edition of 1924. Even the *Life of Johnson* is drawn on for letters and Johnsonian episodes which have not survived in journal form. At what part of the reading public are these more recent volumes aimed?

There are two possible groups of readers. First are the hard-core Boswellians and Johnsonians and their fellow travelers. The hard-core folk have read most of the books by and about their heroes, but are familiar with the Isham edition only if they have access to the rare-book rooms of university libraries. The fellow travelers have at least read the *Life of Johnson* and are receptive to further entertainment. The second group, much larger, has no previous experience but can be counted on to enjoy almost any first-rate biography. The London Journal has equal appeal to both groups; the subsequent volumes tend to annoy one and tire the other.

The hard-core readers are annoyed to find many pages devoted to reprints of the Corsican Journal and the letters to Temple, which they have already read. The general readers are going to be overawed by the sheer bulk of the material, for at the present rate the popular edition is going to run to fifteen or twenty volumes. The editors recognize the problem, but have not yet solved it.

Frank Brady sums it up in his introduction to the present volume: "Any edition like the present is a desperate undertaking, since it seeks to fulfill the double demands of truth and art, while it is inevitably bounded by the nature and inflexibility of the documents that have happened to survive." As good Boswellians the editors hate to leave anything out, but they will have to if the general reader is not to be buried beneath a pyramid of print. Their aim henceforth should be to present the most characteristic portions of the journals and the best of the unpublished letters, reserving the lesser tidbits for the research edition and for Professor Pottle's biography. Unless they do this, they will run head on into the law of diminishing returns.

Brief Comments

CONSTRAINT AND VARIETY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION. By David Riesman. *University of Nebraska. $2.75.*

Riesman's book offers three somewhat disparate essays designed to show what is staying put and what is changing in American education. In it a very scintillating and empirical intelligence is at work, keeping in mind that school and society cannot be sundered but that both have individuality. Sociological terms like *counter-cycle* may prove irritating even though embedded in wit. In essence the author suggests that the country has settled down and education with it. Youth prevailingly is not interested in joining the navy and seeing the world, but rather in marrying early, finding dependable jobs, raising a family. Why should the college have a different outlook? Vested interests persist, corroding occasionally under the pressure of students and parent demands for utility and conformity with mass media. In secondary education, the vitality has gone out of the progressive movement and some of the things it bowled over now appear attractive and valuable.

Riesman's discussion is pointed, sometimes novel, based on shrewd and careful observation. But critics will have their day. Should the laurels for freedom and change be reserved for private colleges and schools? Which institutions first broke down barriers between races and creeds, men and women faculty members? Or one might argue that in public education the courts have come to play a part in the defense of free teaching, simply through enforcing contract law.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

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ATOMIC QUEST: A Personal Narrative. By Arthur Holly Compton. *Oxford University.* *$5.00.*

In this book of personal recollections, Dr. Compton, nuclear physicist, Nobel laureate, and leader of wartime atomic bomb development, has given us a book of deep significance for our times. Readable and fascinating, the book provides insight into the character of the men who made the bomb —militarists, industrialists and scientists— and the way they learned to work together. It is primarily to help us assess the trustworthiness of the scientists upon whom so much of modern civilization depends that Dr. Compton has written this book. How successful he has been the reader must judge, but he cannot fail to discern from intimate glimpses of such men as E. O. Lawrence, Enrico Fermi, Albert Einstein and J. R. Oppenheimer, among many others, that they have a deep and reasoned sense of responsibility. Dr. Compton shows this most clearly in himself. A distinguished scientist and a devout Christian, he discusses his deepest convictions with modesty and candor. Most important for understanding the problems of atomic energy before us today is the detailed and authoritative disclosure of the agonized deliberations that led to the use of the bombs in Japan. Compton's view, which he believes was held by a majority of his colleagues working on the bomb, is that there was no acceptable alternative. That the same terrible decision lies ahead of us is implicit in our mounting stockpiles of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. It is profitable to relive with Dr. Compton those days when the dreadfulness was new.

CHARLES I. CAMPBELL

HARLAN FISKE STONE: Pillar of the Law. By Alpheus Thomas Mason. *Viking.* *$8.75.*

Professor Mason's most recent biography of a member of the Supreme Court describes with vigor the life of a great constitutional lawyer who served the Court and his country from 1925 until his death in 1946, first as an Associate Justice and then as Chief Justice. More significantly, perhaps, Professor Mason offers his readers detailed insight into the Court's handling of the acute social and economic problems of the Great Depression and the subtle and delicate situations created by the wartime necessities of government in their relation to principles of civil liberties.

The early part of Justice Stone's tenure is the story of his efforts, in common with those of Justices Holmes and Brandeis and later Justice Cardozo, to persuade the majority of the Court to relax the rigid interpretations and applications of the Constitution to which they so staunchly adhered. The middle years were enriched by the satisfaction of seeing one after another of his dissenting opinions in constitutional cases become the law of the land. Inevitably, Justice Stone's last days on the Court found certain of his constitutional convictions superseded by those of a new and vigorous Court.

This book does not have the sparkle of the author's earlier work on Justice Brandeis. It gives, however, a faithful reflection of that balance which was perhaps Harlan Fiske Stone's greatest contribution to the Supreme Court.

CROMBIE GARRETT

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND GOVERNMENTAL RESTRAINTS. By Walter Gellhorn. *Louisiana State University.* *$3.75.*

In these three well-documented essays, Walter Gellhorn reappraises the administrative process as a method of governing a free society. Mr. Gellhorn is concerned primarily with the increasing restriction of individual freedoms effected by administrative decisions which are virtually unreviewable. The first and most perceptive of the essays analyzes the recent interchange of roles between long-time defenders and long-time detractors of the administrative process. Today, liberals decry the expansion of administrative power and controls into areas of personal activity previously free of government supervision. Conservatives, only recently afraid of "big government," now embrace the administrative process as a

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STEPHEN J. POLLAK

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN NATURE. By C. Judson Herrick. *University of Texas.* $7.50.

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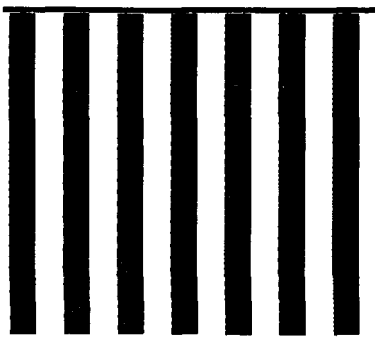

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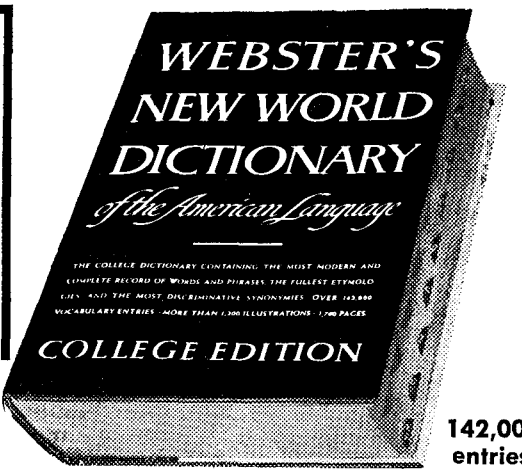

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JOHN PFEIFFER

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Although it is not clear how he arrives at the figure of one hundred dollars per capita per year, his arguments in favor of such a voluntary prepayment plan are lucid

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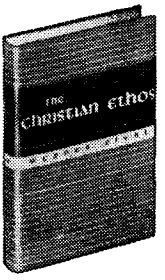

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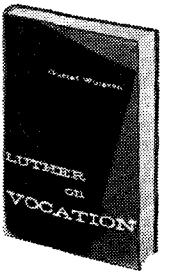

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THE OUTSIDER. By Colin Wilson. *Houghton Mifflin. $4.00.*

This is an attempt to delineate a new type of man. A descendant of the romantic hero, the "Outsider," in fiction or in fact, feels himself outside the petty lives, the irritations and satisfactions of ordinary men. His isolation renders him vulnerable to despair, to states of mind in which life seems unreal, to paralysis; on the other hand, it enables him to know himself, to realize the power of his will, and to act on a superhuman level.

The author traces characteristics of the Outsider in fiction through Barbusse's *L'Enfer,* Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf,* the novels of Dostoevsky; in philosophy and poetry; and in lives of men: T. E. Lawrence, Nijinsky, Van Gogh, Nietzsche. When he adds to the list William Blake, George Fox, D. H. Lawrence and Ramakrishna, to mention a few, we see that the "Outsider plan" can be stretched to include everything—and nothing. If one begins reading Mr. Wilson with a doubt that it is worthwhile trying to label human minds, this doubt is soon confirmed by the author's efforts to fit various quotations to his Procrustean bed. Interesting athletics, but erudition—no.

For the intelligent reader, the hollowness of Mr. Wilson's assumptions, and the wandering of his argument, will be major obstacles. His search for straw to stuff a scarecrow, his Outsider, springs from a contempt for ordinary life, "human trivialities." That these trivialities may be a foundation for spiritual experience, he does not pause to consider. In any final accounting, Mr. Wilson lacks imagination.

LOUIS SIMPSON

LORENZO GHIBERTI. By Richard Krautheimer in collaboration with Trude Krautheimer-Hess. *Princeton University. $30.00.*

The appearance of Professor Krautheimer's monograph is a fitting climax to the excellent studies of Lorenzo Ghiberti which he has published over the past twenty years. A perceptive, lively biography and a valuable chapter on Ghiberti's reputation from the fifteenth century to the present introduce the central and greatest portion of the book, which is a detailed and incisive analysis of Ghiberti's documented works in bronze, particularly of the two sets of doors which he executed for the Florentine Baptistery. The analysis is supported by four hundred illustrations as well as transcriptions of the documents of Ghiberti's life and work. The six concluding chapters, entitled "Renaissance Problems," are of a more varied and general nature, expanding and reinforcing earlier sections of the book. They have as a common theme the waning of the literary view of antiquity among the humanists and the growing *rapprochement* between them and contemporary artists. This important change is viewed principally through the personalities of Ghiberti, Leon Battista Alberti and Brunelleschi from the various aspects of artistic theory, architecture and the collecting of antique objects.

For the scholar, Professor Krautheimer's book is a penetrating insight into artistic life and practice in early fifteenth-century Florence and an irreplaceable reference work. It is written well, with an enthusiasm and perception rare in books of this type.

JOHN PANCOAST

SOUND AND SYMBOL: Music and the External World. By Victor Zuckerkandl. Translated from the German by Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series XLIV. *Pantheon. $5.00.*

Professor Zuckerkandl, a Viennese who is now director of music at Saint John's College in Annapolis, has produced a book

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that should prove of the greatest importance to all philosophers, psychologists and aestheticians working in the field of music. Scholars in these fields have long suffered from the lack of adequate words and concepts for describing their subject matter, and Professor Zuckerkandl has undertaken to supply the lack by plunging into as uncharted and tricky a mental discipline as exists. Much that he has to say is penetrating, sound and helpful, but unfortunately he is a man of abrupt thought processes, and he tosses out several basic concepts on what seem to be inadequate grounds. As a consequence, the theories of motion, time and tonal space that he elaborates are almost surely deficient and unrealistic in certain essential respects.

The specialists will almost surely find this volume stimulating, and just possibly some few of them may be provoked to further attempts to deal with a fascinating, if neglected, subject. But the general reader, tackling this book with the hope of learning what music really is, and yet with none of the equipment for sorting out the wise things from the foolish, had better be warned off. For him, *Sound and Symbol* could prove misleading fare.

RICHARD S. HILL

THE BAY PSALM BOOK, facsimile of the first edition of 1640, with a companion volume, THE ENIGMA OF THE BAY PSALM BOOK. By Zoltán Haraszti. *University of Chicago. $10.00.*

These companion books, handsomely designed, comprise an unusual historical-bibliographical event. One of them is a facsimile reprint of the first edition, 1640, of the *Bay Psalm Book* in line offset. In making it, two original copies were used (both in the Prince Collection, Boston Public Library) to obtain the best reproduction of poorly printed pages. The work is excellently done. For bibliophiles a brief note on the process supplies desired details. This is the finest facsimile ever produced of the book which has brought the highest price ever paid in the rare-book market ($151,000).

Mr. Haraszti's companion volume, *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book*, challenges vigorously the previously accepted accounts of origin and authorship, and also makes a spirited defense of the Psalm Book's literary style against the view of Samuel Kettell, Moses C. Tyler and others in the nineteenth century that it is "harsh and unmusical to the last degree."

Haraszti contends that it was not Richard Mather but John Cotton who did the major work, wrote its preface, and in whose hand the manuscript of the preface is written. He makes a strongly persuasive case which readers must evaluate for themselves. In the process of the debate a fine contribution is made to our understanding of the colonial Puritan spirit, worship and muse.

EDMUND FULLER

A GATHERING OF FUGITIVES. By Lionel Trilling. *Beacon. $1.45.*

With these "fugitive" pieces (fugitive, the author suggests, because they are fleeing from unity), Mr. Trilling firmly adds his name to that short list of critics who can write a familiar literary essay without becoming coy or trivial, and without losing genuine intellectual and critical impact. Eleven of the seventeen short pieces are reprinted from the *Griffin*, which Mr. Trilling helps edit. His task there was not to review a book formally each month, but to select a book he liked and show its interest for the reader by showing its interest for himself. In this relaxed atmosphere, his erudition and scholarship (so soundly demonstrated in his *Matthew Arnold* and *The Liberal Imagination*) sit lightly upon him as he exchanges the formal lecturer's garb for a casual smoking jacket. The range is appropriately wide—from Dickens to Forster, from Henry Adams to Edmund Wilson, with side excursions.

The other six fugitives have been collected from the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *Partisan Review* and elsewhere. But it is the *Griffin* essays which give the volume its flavor and which prove

(Continued on page 258)

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America's Leading General Quarterly

(Continued from page 251)

once again that a good critic, like good wine, mellows as he matures.

CALVIN D. LINTON

THE ENERGIES OF ART. By Jacques Barzun. *Harper. $5.00.*

It is commonly said in France that facility is the most precious of gifts, provided those endowed with it refrain from using it. Mr. Barzun knows better. Critical writing need not be graceless, arduous, painstakingly bent on erecting barriers between the artist and the public or on displaying the critic's skill at discovering subtleties and abysses undiscernible to other mortals. The interpreter of great creators may also aim at enlarging the audience for geniuses and at communicating the fire which stirred in them and in him.

The dozen essays collected in this book (ranging from Shakespeare to Shaw and Hardy, from Goethe and Byron to Henry and William James, through several French writers) find their unity in the author's cult of energy in art. Mr. Barzun's conviction is that a great artist, as he matures, has no more patience for finish and perfection; he accepts his own law, which is to continue creating. He emphasizes his own faults, which he knows to be the ransom of his power.

An introduction on "The Critic's Task Today" upbraids the abdicating laziness of most modern critics content with repeating that all is confusion around them and failing to play their role, which is to rejoice in profusion and disorder and to bring some clarity and logic into the irrational fertility of their age. "How irrational and inspired criticism has to be to keep up with Art!" The courageous message, playfully but ardently expressed, is a timely one.

HENRI PEYRE

LIKE A BULWARK. By Marianne Moore. *Viking. $2.50.*

The poems of Marianne Moore define experience, doing the hard job of thinking and feeling things through to a position in

(Continued on page 260)

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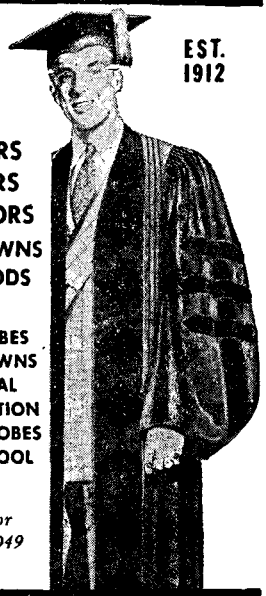

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the consciousness where they become at last inextricable from sensibility. In this latest volume, such poems ostensibly celebrate a porcupine, rosemary, the sycamore, medicine, a race horse named Tom Fool, style, a TV Colorcast of *The Magic Flute*, and the spirit of man. The intensity of vision operating within this heterogeneous subject matter demonstrates one of the richest and most precise sensibilities writing today. Eclectic as her approach may be, her eight pages of notes to the poems indicate the privacy of the experience.

Over the years, Miss Moore's lines have contracted increasingly, substituting virtuosity for resilience; she has moved slightly from discovering her magic to making it —precision of sight has yielded to precision of sound. A poem such as "Style" is a great technical achievement, displaying taste pushed to the limits of talent, but we can better applaud it than participate in it. The espaliered and sheared garden of Miss Moore's latest poetry seems too formalized to allow us a ready belief in the toads that inhabit the shadows; though, to quote her in her own defense, "Because the heart is in it all is well."

ROBERT GAJDUSEK

STANZAS IN MEDITATION AND OTHER POEMS, 1929-1933. By Gertrude Stein. With a preface by Donald Sutherland. *Yale University*. $5.00.

Here is Gertrude Stein using a form she herself evolved but, instead of using it creatively, marking time with it and sort of pacing the floor. This is the troubling substance of the sixth volume in the Yale series of her unpublished writings. "You must write uphill," she says, and she had done it during enough lean, unrecognized years to prove her courage. Now she could relax with the easier, though no less serious, *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, which appeared in 1932. "Stanzas" fills half of this current volume, and in his preface, called "The Turning Point," Sutherland identifies it as an end in Stein. This is clear, certainly, as is his definition of it as "the actualization of ideas." But to hail "Stanzas" as "her summit of innovation, this last reach of her dialectic," is to praise a really pedestrian performance out of proportion to the earlier indubitable masterpieces. One of this wise woman's rare lapses in judgment was to require the posthumous publication of all her unpublished works instead of a selection of them. Some of us cherish her every word, but we would hate to have the public think some of her writings, for instance these, represent her fairly.

W. G. ROGERS

POETS OF TODAY III. *Scribner's*. $3.95.

The third in the "Poets of Today" series, wherein several poets are presented in one volume, is introduced by John Hall Wheelock with a thoughtful essay on "The Poem in the Atomic Age."

Lee Anderson's "The Floating World" stands out with the mark of strongest personality. Here is highly charged poetry carrying the world's wound, the living burden described if not always conveyed, the symbol done with cymbals, too loud often, too crowded, too contrived, yet the whole stamped with direction, a chunk of the life of our time put through experimental form and varying pace into vital construction.

Spencer Brown in "My Father's Business," on the other hand, uses more traditional techniques, observes, records, calls a modest spade a modest spade, tree a tree, ship a ship, so that, for all the substance, there is little for imagination to feed on, no shock and awe of the primary vision. This is sound, everyday poetry from whose intelligence and probity, as well as from the occasional flash of a line or a theme, one gets a sense of a scrupulous, accomplished person rather than of a distinct poetic personality.

Joseph Langland, "The Green Town," more difficult to describe than the other two, is at first reading noticeable for his fresh and free images, the surprise effects of phrase after phrase, an elaborate, sensuous music. One may, however, upon rereading, ask for more severity even while one is beguiled by delight in the stylized complexities of his metaphysical lyrics. What, *in toto*, precisely, through his precise indirect

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diction, is he saying? One must await the answer in his future work and, of the three poets assembled, wonder about it with most curiosity.

LENORE G. MARSHALL

MALONE DIES. By Samuel Beckett. *Grove.* *$1.25.*

Malic acid, derived from the bitterness of the apple, among other sources, and from a plant whose vernacular name is "live-forever," which was once a specific for healing of wounds, gives us, by oxidation, the malonic esters so useful in the synthesizing of various compounds. An operation of the same pharmacology makes *Malone Dies* the appropriate title for the Samuel Beckett novel which synthesizes those malic states of the soul, as Blake might have called them. The characters are here joined in a cosmic comedy whose chief Biblical root is to be found in John 5:8—"Arise, lift up thy bed and walk." This admonition becomes for Beckett the artistic means of celebrating the unity of life and death manifested in the existential problem of man which begins and ends in bed.

Like *Malloy*, Beckett's earlier novel, *Malone Dies* will prove a bitter fruit to reviewers who are prone to form tastes on the evidence of a single bite and biased by an occupational sweet tooth that has given most of them a predilection for candy. Consequently, this is the sort of novel certain to be labeled "morbid" or "pessimistic," for Malone's bed is only another aspect of that cross which has always offended the superficial values of those who, seeking uplift, must first lift themselves up to discover that the burden is not only light but, with the weight of excess comforters removed, positively uplifting.

ALVIN SCHWARTZ

THE CURVE OF THE SNOWFLAKE. By W. Grey Walter. *Norton.* *$3.75.*

This exquisite book by Grey Walter, author of *The Living Brain*, creator of the electronic tortoise which "recognizes" itself in a mirror, essential contributor to the World Health Organization Study Group on the Psychobiological Development of the Child, throws into relief a literary malady of the present. Imaginative speculation about the future should be an important part of literature today when our will to survive is at least as dependent upon the picture of the world we or our descendants will live in as it is upon the contemplation of man's great achievements in the past. But work in the category "science fiction" has become isolated from the main stream of literature and often dismissed.

Dr. Grey Walter has chosen to sign his own name to this gay, intriguing fantasy of the future. This is in contrast with the scientist who uses a nom de plume and acts as if he were free of any responsibility as a scientist when he combines his specialized knowledge of some branch of research with historical and cultural illiteracy to produce a scathing rejection of present-day society, or a nightmare of what man will do in the future.

As elusively charming as the lovely title, this is a book for those who would like to know what writing about the future could be when written with responsibility and gift.

MARGARET MEAD

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

In her discussion of conformity among youth ["Our Documentary Culture," AS: Autumn, 1956], Margaret Mead makes what appear to me as appalling statements and assumptions. First, in criticizing the view that today's youth are characterized by conformity, she rests her case on observations about those who want to work in a UN agency or who can "pick and choose their way in a maze which extends from Saudi Arabia to Japan," and who ask, "Are we *too* conforming?" In other words, the young people to whom she refers are about as far from today's *average* youth as it is possible to get. For her to describe her impressions of those she has known is legitimate; but certainly it is mistaken to assume that these are representative of American youth as a whole.

Second, she mentions that today's youth are "as willing as ever to die for a good cause, if necessary," as evidence that they do not refrain from signing petitions out of cowardice. This is a glib phrase, which is supposed to indicate a self-sacrificing spirit of devotion to high principles. The reality, however, is that most young people know that when they go into the armed forces, it is for the purpose of *killing*, not *being killed*. (When you are going out to kill someone for a good cause, the moral balance is shifted slightly from what it would be if you were going out to offer your life for a good cause. This is quite aside from the question of whether those who are "willing to die" are capable of knowing or determining whether the "cause" is in fact "good.")

She defends the youth who do not sign "carefully plotted" petitions by saying that they are refraining out of "sophisticated knowledge" that such petitions may be used for "compromising and immobilizing the generous and the uncritical liberal," and she refers to signing such documents as putting "one's name on an open-ended list." But the whole point of a petition is not in who signs it, but rather in what it says. Leaving aside the question of whether today's youth fail to sign petitions because of "sophisticated knowledge" or whether because of plain fear, it is a terrible disservice to democracy for Margaret Mead to discuss the abuses of petitions and united fronts without speaking out against the pernicious doctrine and practice of guilt- and suspicion-by-association, and association not in deeds or organization, but association in a list of names! By the never-never land logic which is rampant today, all non-Communists should oppose racial integration because the CP favors it. If one is to be reluctant to sign a petition, it should be because the petition itself is faulty in some respect. I do not sign a great many petitions for this reason; but if I can agree with one I will sign it, though it be sponsored by convicted traitors. If enough Americans would do likewise, the blacklists would soon become so diluted as to be unmanageable, and courage would have gained another victory over the forces of suppression.

Lest it be assumed that I am one of those "middle-aged intellectuals," I should mention that I am twenty-four, undoctrinaire as I can reasonably be, and a pacifist.

ARTHUR HARVEY
Wyandotte, Michigan

* * *

It was almost frightening to read Professor Riesman's analysis of today's graduates

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["The Found Generation," AS: Autumn, 1956]. If the picture is typical, and, judging from my own experience, I would say that in many instances it is, then we have to ask the question whether we should be pleased or disappointed with it.

I, as a 1956 graduate, maintain that the latter should be the reaction. My reason is the apparent absence of any real appreciation of religious values on the part of those interviewed. This is poignantly illustrated by the comment of one graduate who said he would probably go to church because it "more or less builds unity." Now I realize that any recognition that there is something amiss in the religious life of today's generation will be shrugged off by many as being old-fashioned on my part. Yet this whole matter is of concern to me not only as a recent graduate, but also as one interested in the outlook on life of my contemporaries; and there must be more than a few elders and parents, to say nothing of the many individuals not represented in the interviews, who share with me this feeling of disappointment at the attitudes expressed in this article.

Despite the fact that the reactions of the students were in many cases typical, I cannot share the conclusion of Professor Riesman that they "have already made up their minds as to exactly who they are." If the author were not a renowned social scientist, I would be tempted to say that this attitude betrays a slight naïveté on the part of the observer. I say this because I have talked with many students on my own campus and with others who have gone elsewhere for their education, and I think that many of today's graduates are decidedly confused as to their basic values and goals in life. Moreover, interviews like those upon which the author's observations were based are less apt to reveal a person's real outlook than is a bull session or a more intimate discussion with a fellow student.

It may be true that the ceiling is low over the heads of today's graduates, but it appears that sometimes it is so low as to blind them to those values without which we can hardly be called "the found generation." Such statements as "I'd live in Nome, Alaska, if there was money there" or "I think contentment is the main thing" are very nearly tragic in their implications for 1975. To a social scientist, such facts are perhaps not alarming. To a member of this generation, they should be the impetus for reflection and re-evaluation of aims.

ROBERT G. LARIMER
Union Theological Seminary
New York, New York

* * *

As a recent graduate of a large Midwestern university and a new subscriber to your magazine, I feel compelled to take exception to Mr. Riesman's remarks on the draft issue.

Many students do oppose the draft on philosophical or religious grounds, but they have been cowed by the omnipresent pressure of public opinion. They have been deluded by the effective public relations of the Pentagon brass. Brandishing the shield of defensive preparation, the militarists have stifled all opposition to their program of Universal Military Training. With the passage of the Reserve Forces Act in 1955, the last historic barrier to the UMT program had been removed.

It's fortunate that most college students do complain and grumble about military service, for America will rue the day when her youth endorse any compulsory military service. As Toynbee has so brilliantly portrayed in his monumental works, an armed country is a doomed country, and to the motto of one of our armed forces, *Semper paratus,* may be added someday, God forbid, *pro morte.*

RONALD W. ADY
Elmwood Park, Illinois

* * *

Your last two issues have been outstanding. They place the SCHOLAR with few peers in the top bracket of American periodical literature, and they have been readable throughout. The great weakness in past numbers has been the abstract character of too many articles. They try the reader's patience, which is a fairly common criticism, and I would add that at times they lead his understanding to err. Perry Miller's "The Plight of the Lone Wolf" [Aut-

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umn, 1956] aroused nostalgic memories of younger years when there were giants in the land to revere. J. W. Krutch is another man who can cast the convictions of a scholarly mind into literary prose.

As for favorite and neglected books of the last quarter of a century, I can say that a considerable portion of my reading time at the age of three score and ten is given to the rereading of books I have known and loved and which now assume the added significance which can only be brought on by "the years that bring the philosopher's mind." It is one of the ironies of life that just when a man has gathered enough wisdom for great living, he is called on to die. Yes, I agree that some of your "neglected books" merited neglect, but the many most certainly did not. Indubitably, you have resurrected many of the latter.

JASPER JACOB STAHL
Waldoboro, Maine

* * *

This I fear is my last subscription to the SCHOLAR, for I shall be eighty when this renewal expires and my vision is seriously impaired.

Due to this condition, I am belatedly getting around to the Autumn issue. My sister has been reading a bit to me. The whole issue is a happy reminder of a former anniversary number (fifteenth, I believe) which Irita Van Doren also edited.

I was and am delighted with Marston Bates's "allergic reaction to words." Both the articles by Margaret Mead and Harlow Shapley have been enjoyed, and I am hoping to read them for myself. I am looking forward to hearing "The New Man in the Arts" and "The Meaning of Bandung." I think the theme of "New Departures and Directions" is worth repeating in kind.

BERNICE E. CLARK
South Bend, Indiana

* * *

Although I have read the SCHOLAR for many years, I prefer to be specific rather than general in a criticism of it. Therefore, let me take the Summer, 1956, number as an example, typical as I believe it is, and comment accordingly.

Frequently I skip the lead article as being too academic. Such is not the case in this issue. Strunsky, after a somewhat bookish introduction, gets down to cases in a way I like ["The Cult of Personality"]. I greatly appreciate the SCHOLAR's little paragraph which gives a bit of the history of the author. One appreciates so much more the man about whom he knows something.

Articles like Kazin's "Sholem Aleichem: The Old Country," journals like Gurko's, and, especially for my taste, mysteries like Dickinson's "Return at Dusk," you could have more of with consequent reduction of emphasis on the academic.

Your poetry I sometimes scan, often skip, rarely read through. It is too modern for a man who, while no poet himself, loves the old classics such as were taught to him in high school. The article by Gustave Weigel contrasting Catholic and Protestant theologies is excellently done, especially coming as it does from a Catholic. Most Catholics are rarely objective when writing or speaking on Protestantism. Such an article is a real contribution to the understanding and tolerance of man for man. I am for more articles of this nature.

The back pages I scan except for the book reviews. Those I usually read through. There's something wrong with me because I don't like Joseph Wood Krutch.

Now, having said all this, I'll admit I'm enough of an intellectual snob that I like to have THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR on top of the pile on my library table.

Good fortune to you in many more years of publication.

ALAN A. PHILLIPS
Minneapolis, Minnesota

CORRECTION

We regret that in our Winter, 1956-57 issue there is an error on page 126 in the letter from Allen Cabaniss regarding "Catholic and Protestant Theologies in Outline" by Father Gustave Weigel [AS: Summer, 1956]. In the first sentence of Mr. Cabaniss' letter, ironic statement *should be read* irenic statement.

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